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FROM

Prof. G. L. Kittredge

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COMMUNICATIONS

BETWEEN

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN WORLD.

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The Unseen World;

COMMUNICATIONS WITH IT,

REAL OR IMAGINARY,

INCLUDING

APPARITIONS, WARNINGS, HAUNTED PLACES,

PROPHECIES, AERIAL VISIONS,

ASTROLOGY, &c. &c.

by

LONDON:
JAMES BURNS, 17, PORTMAN STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE.

MDCCCXLVII.

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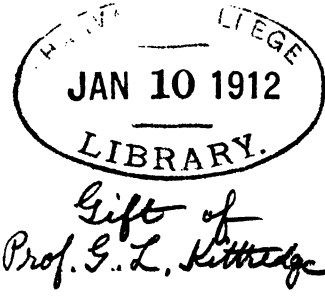

Gift of
Prof. G. L. Kittredge

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PREFACE.

THE following little book makes no pretence at being a systematic treatise on the subject on which it treats: its aim is to set forth Christian views on a point of popular belief which writers have generally considered worthy of ridicule or pity, or at least susceptible of a natural explanation.

With respect to stories hitherto unpublished, the writer has related none which he has not good grounds for believing; and he has endeavoured to state, in each particular account, the degree of evidence by which it is supported.

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He ought, perhaps, to state, that he never saw Mr. Dendy's very interesting *Philosophy of Mystery* till he had almost concluded his own work. He has inserted, in different places, a few striking relations from it.

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COMMUNICATIONS

REAL OR IMAGINARY.

NIGHT I

THE SUBJECT PROPOSED.

SOPHRON. The wind has shifted to the north. It will be a bitter night.

EUSEBIA. It is almost a pity to shut out the sight of such a sky, so intensely blue and solemn.

PISTUS. It *is* solemn: the winter night has a moral character of its own, if I may use the expression; a beauty differing from that of all other seasons, and, as I think, surpassing them.

EUSEBIA. Yet what can be more beautiful than a summer night? At the time, I mean, when the west has lost its more gaudy hues, and the only trace of the departed sun is the calm still belt of green that reposes above the distant hills, as if they were the barriers of this world, and that quiet ocean of light the gulf which parts us from the realm of spirits. Then there is the soft scent of

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the sleeping flowers, the dewiness of the air, the few bright stars that peep through the still faintly illuminated sky, the joyous song, it may be, of the nightingale, the merry chirp, that seems, wherever you go, to be equally close to you, of the grasshopper. It is repose in its truest sense,—life enough to banish the idea that nature, as people talk, can ever sleep;—rest enough to lead on the mind to a more perfect, even an eternal repose.

PISTUS. It is true. But do you not see how much of this world there is mixed up in our ideas of the summer night? Flowers, and birds, and dew, and the brightness over the western hills. It is beautiful, but still it is earthly: we view it through our own medium, and it takes its colour from that. It is not so now. The sky, and the sky alone, so glorious, yet so awful, so spangled with brightness, so mysterious in its depth, that is all. There is nothing that can remind any sense of earth; nay, the very cold seems to enhance the solitude, to tear away all connexion between yourself and external nature, to make you feel more utterly lonely. And you stand and gaze on those bright worlds, till you seem as if you were banished into the desolate regions of space; and there, without any orb near you, looked forth into the perfect blackness around, and watched the motions of the worlds that above, beneath, and on every side, were moving along in their mysterious path. It is the time when you feel, if ever, that there must be a world of spirits; when

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the mind seems almost brought into contact with that invisible universe; and when, more than at any other period, it longs to know something of its future home, and to hear some of those "unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

SOPHRON. There can be no subject more interesting,—perhaps, also, more perilous,—than the union and sympathy of the seen with the unseen world. Certainly none more interesting; for who would not wish to know somewhat of those beings by whom he is daily, hourly, acted upon? who seem to have the power of suggesting thoughts or plans, constantly and as a matter of every-day occurrence, and occasionally of interfering for our physical safety in a, perhaps not strictly supernatural, but still most marvellous, manner: beings, too, whom we hope hereafter to possess as our associates for ever; and who, actually at this time, are the associates of many whom we have loved and lost. And perilous also; for much to pry into the concerns of that world is to attempt to raise the curtain which GOD has drawn, and which death only is appointed to rend for ever. We are somewhat like men who by night are treading some dangerous path, a precipice on each side: while all is dark, they can proceed safely; show them the light, and with light comes certain destruction.

PISTUS. And yet it is curious that, care as little

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as they may for it in other ways, all present intercourse with the unseen world will be a subject to interest every one; variously indeed, according to the various character of the mind, but still really. And why not? It is an article in the Church's Creed; it is a main point of her teaching. Common minds will feel and express it in vulgar ways; and tales of witchcraft, apparitions, prophetic dreams, and the like, will never want hearers and believers. Others, while not rejecting these things, will rather fix their thoughts on that communion which, at this very moment, they are holding with the departed faithful of all ages; on the illapses of thought which have no natural origin; on all those mysterious proofs, —the more mysterious, the more real,—that we are knit together in one fellowship with the inhabitants of a better country, that is, a heavenly.

EUSEBIA. The Japanese belief, that birds of Paradise are the souls of doves, is a good type of that feeling.

> "In the bright fables of an eastern land,
> Where song and moral travel hand in hand,
> They say, the dove laments not as alone,
> That lingers here, her sweet companions gone:
> She knows that, denizen'd in brighter skies,
> They shine as glorious birds of Paradise:
> And though she may not see their sportive rings,
> Nor the fleet glancing of their rainbow wings,
> (For earthlier vision clogs her earthlier eye,)
> To know and feel them near is ecstasy.

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And so, methinks, comes such a season, fraught
With heav'nlier communing and purer thought,
What time we linger o'er the quiet rest
Of those, the lovely once, and now the blest!"

PISTUS. A very pretty fable, and most true in its antitype. In a thousand ways, clogged and shackled though it be by its mate, the mind will assert its native powers, and will communicate without the aid of its grosser companion. Undoubtedly it does so towards the living; and to my mind undoubtedly also towards the departed. What is commoner, for instance, than to feel all one's affection awakened, for no assignable cause, in a moment, for some absent person whom we love, but of whom we have neither been speaking nor hearing? Again: it has passed into a proverb, that if a totally unexpected visiter arrives, those to whom he presents himself have been at that moment talking of him. And so, if two friends are in conversation on a given topic, and an entirely different train of thoughts suggests itself to one, it is almost certain to present itself also to the other, even though no common external object should have given rise to it.

SOPHRON. Very true. It is by noticing apparently trivial details like these that we must arrive, if ever there should be such a science, at some insight into psychology. But the difficulty of "Know thyself" is as great to us as it was to Chilon of old. What are those lines, Theodora,

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you were repeating the other day on this same subject of communion with the invisible world? They would be much to the point.

THEODORA. I will read them to you.

"As touching this same union, I have read
A tale, that teacheth this,—how far apart
Wisdom and knowledge, when it list them, dwell;
Howe'er the vulgar deem. There dwelt in France
A maiden, who was wont to sing their wild
And wondrous legends at the shut of eve,
And to her lover's wed her voice and lute.
Her lover died;—and 'twas her mournful use
In the same chamber, at the self-same time,
To sing the self-same strains; and as his harp,
Neglected now, responsive echo gave,
She deem'd his spirit breath'd amidst its chords.
Thus pass'd she every eve, and in the thought
Found sweetest consolation: till at length
One of those same philosophising fools
Who, knowing all, feel nought,—who pluck a flower,
Give it a name, and tread it under foot,
And call *that* wisdom, told, and truly told,
How nature's laws ordain'd that when the hand
Pass'd o'er one harp, the self-same chord then struck
Should vibrate on its fellow. She, the while,
Lost the sweet type to gain the useless truth;
And so her harp was silenced; and she pined
Until she join'd the parted one again."

PISTUS. To inquire into all the methods in which this intercommunion of the visible with the invisible is carried on would be a task not ill-suited to these long winter nights, and perhaps not unprofitable to us. What say you? Shall we enter on the inquiry, bringing to it what separate

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information we may each of us possess, and making our common remarks on every thing that is related?

SOPHRON. Content. Any thing which helps us to realize our connexion with the unseen world is useful; and we will boldly enter on the subject you propose. And, in listening to any details which the wisdom of the world would reject as improbable or impossible, we shall, I hope, be guided by a wiser feeling. We will weigh them on their evidence only: if that is sufficient to convince a man in his every-day conduct, it shall be sufficient for us; if not, while we stigmatize nothing as impossible, because it is unusual, we shall return a verdict of "not proven."

THEODORA. I shall be most glad to listen to such a discussion. We have, I think, nine nights before we separate: will it not be better to observe some kind of order in the treatment of our subject? else we shall surely be quite overwhelmed with its magnitude.

SOPHRON. We must not cramp ourselves too logically; as well because the nature of the inquiry does not well admit of it, as because its various branches run so naturally one into the other. Still some such kind of arrangement is undoubtedly desirable, and we shall do well to determine on it previously.

EUSEBIA. So I think; and then we shall come better prepared to the consideration of the question.

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PISTUS. We shall begin, I presume, on generals, and descend to particulars.

SOPHRON. Let us commence by considering the various ways in which it has pleased GOD to ordain that external nature shall sympathize with revealed religion; for I would rather use the term sympathy than that of symbolism. We will see if we cannot find such evident types of, or agreement with, the great mysteries of the faith in the face of things around us as to make another kind of argument from analogy applicable also to them. That is the lowest branch of our subject, because, strictly speaking, it cannot be said to involve any thing supernatural: but still it is a branch, as coming quite within that communion of the two worlds on which we have been dwelling. From this we shall proceed to consider those instances in which it has pleased GOD to make great aerial phenomena attend, or predict, great disturbances on earth. This will involve a consideration of armies fighting in the air, fiery crosses, comets, and meteors; and will lead us to refer incidentally to the "famines, and earthquakes, and pestilences in divers places," which are the "beginning of sorrows."

PISTUS. The arrangement, I think, is good. Then let us proceed to aerial apparitions or signs, whether natural or supernatural, such as whirlwinds and sudden tempests, as connected with the death of great men, stationary lights, corpse lights, S. Elmo's lights, firedrakes, and Will of the Wisp.

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SOPHRON. From that we shall advance in our investigation to an inquiry on what principle, and with what reason, ancient lore peopled solitary places with supernatural beings, whether demons, or an inferior kind of divinities; and why the same belief has descended to our own times; whether connected with water, as Naiads; with woods and hills, as Fauns, Satyrs, Dryads, Hamadryads, the Brown Man of the Moors, Fairies, the Good People, Trolls, Telchens, Pixies, and Pixycolts; or with houses, as the old Lar and our own Robin Good-fellow. Then it will be time for us to debate the grand question, if the spirits of the departed have ever been permitted to visit the living in a visible form. And here we shall do well to turn our attention to those instances where, at the moment of a person's death, he has been believed to appear to friends at a distance; to those where the spirit of a departed man has forewarned of death, averted danger, or revealed a secret; and to those manifestations where such visit has apparently been without use.

PISTUS. Let us also go into the subject of family apparitions: those cases, I mean, where the head of a house is asserted to receive intimation of the approaching decease of any member of it by a known signal, which is perfectly intelligible to himself. Dreams will naturally next occupy our attention: and this will as naturally be connected with the subject of second sight.

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SOPHRON. We shall then only have to discuss the grounds on which ancient belief in astrology and witchcraft rested, to bring our inquiry to an end.

THEODORA. It is a most comprehensive one; and, if discussed with an unprejudiced mind, almost fresh ground.

PISTUS. I think so. But, in my opinion, we are also bound to notice any instances of imposture, or innocent mistake, which may have given rise to the belief in a supernatural interference, when in reality none such existed.

SOPHRON. We are: and that branch of our subject, though less novel, will also be profitable.

PISTUS. It is, I think, a proof of our fallen nature that the whole subject of apparitions should be invested with such terror. Why we should not rejoice in the visitations of the inhabitants of a brighter and better world than our own, on any other hypothesis, seems unintelligible. And even supposing the apparition to be permitted to come from the place of the lost, still it is strange that one does not reason with Hamlet,—

> "——— for my soul, what can it do to that,
> Being a thing immortal as itself?"

What harm such apparitions could possibly do us it is hard to say: we are all that they are, and something more; and that something bearing at least an approximation to that which they will be. In one sense we are more perfect beings than

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they are: we have the body, debased, it is true, and sinful, to which they will one day be rejoined, and without which they will not, and cannot, be complete. Physical harm they cannot do us; that were contrary not only to experience, but almost to possibility. If it were not for sin, I believe that we should feel no fear.

SOPHRON. Do you think so? Well, I am not quite of your opinion. I believe that the sight of a spirit, divested of the body, is so perfectly unnatural to persons existing in a compound nature, brings so painfully to mind the great struggle which must take place when the two are dissolved, and sets forward so prominently the idea of duality in a single being, that, had we never fallen, we yet should have felt a revulsion at it. That Adam conversed familiarly with angels may be very possible: but if those angels assumed a material form, as was undoubtedly the case in most of such instances as are recorded in the Old Testament, the cause for terror I have stated disappears.

PISTUS. According to you, it would follow that the act of death would be terrible, were the supposition possible, to a perfect man; that it would have been so to Adam had he never fallen, and had yet been removed to the more immediate presence of GOD in the same manner that has been appointed to his descendants, only without physical pain.

SOPHRON. So I think it would. If the sepa-

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ration from an intimate friend of twenty years is so excessively painful, where yet the degree of intimacy is nothing to that which connects soul and body, what must be the severing of the spirit from its earthly attendant? What must it be for the soul to lose the command of the organ it has so long employed, and informed, and governed; through which it has received the greater part of the impressions it has obtained, and which it is now about to leave to corruption, and dust, and the worm? What the tie is which unites the one to the other, none, of course, can say; whether moral, or physical, or composed of both, it must be broken: and do you imagine that so strong a link can be shattered without pain of some kind?

PISTUS. How then will you account for the serenity and beauty which the face of a corpse will often assume in the moment of death? We know, for example, that in death from a gunshot wound the countenance is generally very peaceful; in that from a sword, or such like instrument, distressingly convulsed. Does not this seem to show that there is no pain but physical pain, and that when this is felt it leaves its impression, and that when no impression is left, it is because there is no pain?

SOPHRON. I grant you that there is far more suffering attendant on death in some cases than in others. But that which is involved in the very act of death is, I am inclined to think, the same. The placidity which usually accompanies death

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from a gunshot may arise only from the shortness of the physical pain which accompanies it; for two equally, to all appearance, sudden deaths may involve very unequally prolonged periods of bodily suffering. It is believed by many physicians that death, considered as the annihilation of physical sensations, does not instantly accompany decapitation; and there have not been wanting eminent men who assert that feeling exists for many minutes after the stroke has been given. This would well answer your objections. But you say that the face assumes that serene expression in death. I should rather say, after it; for the shadow, or convulsion, or by whatever name you choose to designate it, that passes over the face in the very article of death is always awful.

THEODORA. I do not comprehend what you said just now of its being unnatural and painful to see a duality of operation in one being.

SOPHRON. I can explain it to you by a very familiar instance. Did you ever see the metamorphosis by which the pupa of the dragon-fly assumes its perfect state?

THEODORA. No.

SOPHRON. Thus it is: the pupa, which is provided with legs, climbs some way up a flag, or other water plant, which it grasps tightly, and then stretches and strains itself in every direction: presently the head bursts, and the antennæ and head of the fly protrude; also its two front

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legs. The pupa holds on with *its* legs: the fly endeavours to extricate itself from the pupa with its own, and finally succeeds, leaving the lifeless husk on the plant which it ascended. But the sight of an apparent struggle between two animals possessing the same body is very unpleasant.

THEODORA. It is getting late, and we must, I fear, conclude. You will begin, then, to-morrow night with the manner in which external nature symbolizes revealed truth?

SOPHRON. Very willingly.

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NIGHT II.

THE SYMBOLISM OF NATURE.

SOPHRON. IT is wonderful that such an age as the last could produce such a book as "Butler's Analogy." His is a method of argument, which, till tried, must have been thought of very slight weight; but, once made proof of,—and proved by such a hand, it possesses a force perfectly overwhelming and crushing. He, of course, did not exhaust it; nay, he probably did not carry it on so far as he would have done in a more believing age. Perhaps, also, the fact that his was not a poetical mind, might have in some cases rendered his details less perfect than his design. But, had he chosen, there are two remarkable instances of analogy in symbolism of external nature, as compared with revealed mystery, which, to any unprejudiced person, must be quite convincing.

EUSEBIA. You refer, of course, to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the Sign of the Cross.

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SOPHRON. I do. Let us begin with the former; —the instances of which are perhaps less obvious, and probably less striking.

PISTUS. The whole of science, taken in whatever point of view, seems to depend on three original principles. In colour we have three neutrals, black, white, and grey. In acousticks, three primitive sounds,—the medient, tonic, and dominant. Form can address itself to the eye but in three ways,—in architecture, painting, and sculpture: the kind of lines which produce form are three, and each of these has three subdivisions; the straight line has three positions,—horizontal, perpendicular, oblique; the crooked has three,—as presenting either a right, acute, or obtuse angle; and the curved has three,—for it may be a portion of a circle, a volute, or an ellipse. Again, every one knows the remarkable properties of the figure three—properties which no other number has, or could have.

SOPHRON. And even in simpler matters than these, the same trinal arrangement is visible. All time must be past, present, and future: every deed must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Now, it is all very well to say that there is an absolute necessity for this, so that even Omnipotence could not have ordered it otherwise: granting this necessity, whence does it arise? Do we not gain the more abundant confirmation of our position? But it surely is incumbent on others to prove this necessity. It is quite possible

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to conceive a state of things in which it should not be the case; it is quite within the range of imagination, that time should have a fourfold division, or that the progress of any event might be capable of being divided into two stages, besides the beginning and the end. There is no essential impossibility in this. If it be possible to conceive a thing which has neither beginning nor end, as eternity; if it be possible to conceive a thing which has beginning, but no end, as the soul of man; we may safely assert the possibility of the conception of something that has four, five, or even more separate stages of existence, intrinsically and essentially. But if this conception be possible with regard to one thing, it is certain that it might be so with regard to every thing; which is enough for us.

PISTUS. Look again at what has so often been brought forward as an illustration of the same mystery,—a luminous body like the sun. From the substance itself, light and heat are inseparable. Take again the threefold division of the mind, which so naturally suggests itself; the will, the understanding, the imagination. It is a world, so to speak, of triplicity; and so even heathens seem to have felt, and to have shaped their myths accordingly.

SOPHRON. Why, it even descended to a proverb, —Every three is perfect. The better nature consists of three, says Plutarch. They assign the number three to the highest GOD, says Servius.

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So Jupiter has his triple thunderbolt, Neptune his trident, Pluto his three-headed dog: there were three fates, three furies, thrice three muses: even primeval nature had its Triad, Ægæon, Briareus, and Gyges: and whole volumes have been written on the various trinities which the Greeks and Egyptians adored. So also in India: so, in fact, wherever there has been a system of religious worship at all.

PISTUS. From whence, I suppose, you would gather that the impress of external nature is found in these trinities; the great mystery of the one ever blessed Trinity having moulded and informed them: which is the point of our consideration.

SOPHRON. Just so; yet I confess that to myself the Cross is more wonderfully set forth in nature —and the difference of the manifestations of these two mysteries is in itself most striking. Things, as considered in their essence, present the former; things as presenting themselves, and taken in reference to us, the latter. It is extraordinary how almost all human arts bring out this form strikingly, and how new inventions are every day bringing it out in new ways.

EUSEBIA. And also, I think, in many of these instances, the idea of resistance and self-denial, that is, the very doctrine of the Cross, is exhibited. A bird, for example, while perched on the bough represents no particular figure;—but he cannot rise from the earth and struggle up

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through the air, except by making the sign of the Cross.

PISTUS. It is the same thing with swimming: make an effort against the water, and you must do it in the form of the Cross. The same thing also in rowing. Let a boat fall down the stream, and you may steer her onward: make her ascend against it, or struggle with the sea, and again you represent the Cross.

SOPHRON. And, of course, every one knows that the masts of a ship are most striking figures of the same thing. I never saw this more wonderfully exemplified, than once in walking from Queenborough to Sheerness. It is a low marshy tract of country; and on that day a haze hung over the landscape, and seemed completely to blot out every feature of interest that the scene might otherwise have presented. But to the left, a low embankment ran along the side of the Medway; and above that rose the bare lower masts of six or eight men of war laid up in ordinary in the river. Without sails, cordage, or upper yards, the central mast on each rising above the mizen and foremast, they looked exactly like a series of those Calvaries which you see in foreign lands;—three black Crosses, standing out against the white mist of a hot August sky.

PISTUS. I remember that, on a still autumn afternoon, I was hurrying homewards through one of the pleasant valleys of Surrey. The grass was beginning to grow crisp; the shadows, half an

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hour before so well defined, to melt into a grey confusion; a frosty purple hue to steal over the sky; a solemn, yet not melancholy stillness to draw in over the scene. Before me was the west, kindled into such a fiery redness, that you wondered how such tints could look so deadly cold; half the sun's orb was below the horizon; half, dilated to twice its natural size, was cradled among the distant hills; but between me and that scene of splendour, and cresting the top of a low knoll, the sails of an old windmill seemed to impress the sign of the Cross on the whole landscape, and to tell, as with an audible voice, by what means only we can attain those bright worlds of which the western sky is a type and a promise.

EUSEBIA. And it is strange that the very means of procuring earthly food should be in the figure of that which has procured us all our spiritual sustenance.

THEODORA. So again, a barn is almost of necessity built in the form of a Cross, as if it would set forth the means by which the faithful shall be gathered up into the everlasting garner hereafter

EUSEBIA. A curious illustration connected with sound has not, that I am aware of, been ever noticed. If on a thin metal plate you sprinkle sand, and then strike, on a stringed instrument, that note which is the fundamental sound,—the key note, if we may use the expression, of the plate, the sand will immediately arrange itself in

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the form of a Cross, as if the metal could not bear to be impressed with any other sign.

SOPHRON. Look at crystallization, again. Into what exquisite crosses do congealing substances form themselves! He that should desire some new ideas for the gable crosses of his church, could hardly do better than study a book of crystallography.

PISTUS. That the same holy form is marked on the petals of almost every flower, all botanists know. I remember once, in an African mountain, that jutted out into the calm tropical sea, I was wandering on with a friend in the heat of the day, and exploring the various crags and ravines by which it descended to the shore. There was a burning sky above,—not a single cloud tempered the rays of the sun,—the barren soil, volcanic in its origin, and every where shooting up its red crumbling rocks through the thin layers and patches of mould that were scattered upon them, produced neither trees nor grass,—nothing but dwarf thistles, that on all sides were sending out their downy little seed vessels on the bosom of the wind. We longed for water,—we longed for some cooling fruit; and to all appearance we might as well have longed for ice and snow. At length we discovered, loosely anchoring itself among the hot and detached rocks, a pleasant little plant, with leaves and berries not unlike that of the mallow. "We may, however," said my

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friend, "eat of these with safety: it is a cruciferous plant." "Why so?" said I, who am no botanist, and could not see the connexion between his statement and his reason. "Are you not aware," returned he, "that all cruciferous plants bear fruit which may be eaten, to say the least, with impunity, and which is often singularly nutritious and wholesome?" "Is it not wonderful," answered I, "that the sign of the Cross impressed on the leaves of a plant should proclaim to man that it will not hurt him? Is it not as if there went forth such virtue out of the bare form, that no evil thing had power to endure its presence?"

EUSEBIA. Nor is this the case where the hand of GOD has immediately impressed the sign, but where the hand of man has done so too; as if Providence would have him, choose he or not, make use of the same form by which he was saved from perdition.

SOPHRON. It is proved in many modern inventions and contrivances, in none more so than, where you would least expect to find it,—in railways. Is it not curious that in the best managed of them the signals should be made by this form? Most conspicuous, on a high embankment, is the tall Cross that stretches forth its arms to warn of danger; hallowing, as it were, those long lines of traffic, and seeming to promise security in the whirl and hurry of almost inconceivable speed.

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THEODORA. Certainly a meaning which never entered the minds of those who contrived that system of signals.

PISTUS. It is a singular thing, too, though known to every one, that if, in looking at any bright light, the eye be almost closed, the rays will, to all appearance, put themselves in the form of a Cross.

SOPHRON. It was a tradition in Mexico, before the arrival of the Spaniards, that when that form (which is found engraved in their ancient monuments) should be victorious, the old religion should disappear. The same sign is also said to have been discovered on the destruction of the Temple of Serapis at Alexandria, and the same tradition to have been attached to it. One can hardly imagine this prophecy to have been current in more ways than two;—either by a supernatural intimation, or by a continuous tradition. It could hardly have been by the force of analogy, and by observation that the whole of nature was signed with the Cross.

PISTUS. The constellation so named is one of the most striking that glorify the southern sky; very beautiful it is when beheld from the deck of the ship, as she flies westward before the trade winds. And still more majestic, perhaps, in crossing a mountain range by night, when the dark peaks tower up before you, and the golden Cross surmounts them still, and seems to beckon from another world beyond them.

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SOPHRON. This celestial Cross naturally brings to mind the instances in which the appearance of such a sign has been strictly supernatural. Of the Cross seen by Constantine, enough has been already written to satisfy, and more than to satisfy, every common inquirer that such a phenomenon did really exist. And that which appeared at Jerusalem during the Bishopric of S. Cyril is equally remarkable, and at least as certain.

EUSEBIA. Of what kind was that?

SOPHRON. You shall have it in the saint's own words. Reach me down his works, Pistus;—that folio immediately behind you. Here is his account written to Constantius. "In these holy days of the holy Pentecost, on the seventh of May,"—the year was 351,—"about nine o'clock, appeared in the heaven an enormous Cross, composed of light, over the height of holy Golgotha, and reaching to the holy Mount of Olives. Nor was it seen by one or two, but, most manifestly, by the whole multitude of the city. Nor,—as it might be natural to suppose,—was it a thing which like a mere phantom passed away rapidly, but was visible above the earth for many hours, exceeding in glory the rays of the sun."—And he proceeds to tell how young and old crowded to the churches; and even the very heathens adored the GOD That had done this great wonder[1]. And

[1] S. Cyril, Hierosol. Opp. p. 247. Ed. Par. 1640.

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this does not depend on Cyril's testimony alone, amply sufficient as that would be to any right-minded person: a crowd of witnesses, heretical as well as catholic, bare testimony to the notoriety of the fact.

PISTUS. Yes, as poor Gibbon says with respect to the heretical witnesses, "they could not refuse a miracle, even at the hand of an enemy."

SOPHRON. Strictly supernatural, perhaps, this Cross was not; for it seems to have been encircled by a magnificent rainbow, and may in some degree have partaken of the nature of a halo. Such appearances have been observed at other times, and occasionally in connexion with mock suns.

PISTUS. The length is said to have been more than half a mile; a point, of course, which must have been a mere guess. It seems, however, to have been visible at Antioch, and, it is also said, to the armies of Constantius and Magnentius. In that case it must have been of a very different character from a halo.

SOPHRON. Nor have such appearances entirely ceased in our own days. In 1838, at Jerusalem, for many successive nights, a dark Cross was observed in the same quarter of the heavens, as if the stars over which it extended had been blotted out.

EUSEBIA. I perceive that we are somewhat trespassing on the next part of our subject.

SOPHRON. We are so. Did you ever hear the

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Greek tradition concerning the origin of the tree of which the true Cross was made?

EUSEBIA. No.

SOPHRON. Thus it is. When Adam, they say, was dying, he sent his son to the garden of Eden, to request that the angel who kept the way thereto would send him some of the fruit of the Tree of Life, that he might taste it and live. The angel denied the request, but gave to the son of Adam three seeds. "Place them," said he, "in thy father's mouth; and when they shall have grown into trees, he shall be freed from his sickness." The son returned, and found that Adam had already expired. Taking the three grains, he placed them in his father's mouth, and buried him thus. From these grains, in process of time, sprang three trees, of which the wood of the Cross was made[1].

THEODORA. A very beautiful fable. It is surprising how many tales there are connected with the SAVIOUR and His Passion, which in different times and places have been invented for the purpose of accounting for the natural habits and instincts of animals and plants.

EUSEBIA. Like that sweet superstition, current in Brittany, which would explain the cause why the robin redbreast has always been a favourite and protegé of man. While our SAVIOUR was

[1] Joan. de Monte Villâ, It. Terr. Sanct. i. 17. ap. Kornman. de mirac. mort. iv. 14.

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bearing His Cross, one of these birds, they say, took one thorn from His Crown, which dyed its breast; and ever since that time, robin redbreasts have been the friends of man.

THEODORA. In like manner, the aspen is said to have been the tree which formed the Cross; and thenceforth its boughs, as filled with horror, have trembled ceaselessly.

PISTUS. It is also believed by the poor that the stripes on the shoulders of the ass represent the sign of the Cross, in commemoration that on that animal our LORD made His final entrance into Jerusalem.

SOPHRON. An example, which in modern times would be considered ludicrous, of the manner in which our ancestors made external nature bear witness to our LORD, occurs in what is called the Prior's Chamber in the small Augustinian house of Shulbrede, in the parish of Linchmere, in Sussex. On the wall is a fresco of the Nativity; and certain animals are made to give their testimony to that event in words which somewhat resemble, or may be supposed to resemble, their natural sounds. A cock in the act of crowing, stands at the top, and a label, issuing from his mouth, bears the words, *Christus natus est.* A duck inquires, *Quando, quando?* A raven hoarsely answers, *In hâc nocte.* A cow asks, *Ubi, ubi?* And a lamb bleats out, *Bethlehem.*

PISTUS. I fear, as you say, that to modern ideas such a representation would be rather irreverent

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than edifying. In the same way it was, and may be still, believed, that if you enter a cowhouse at midnight on Christmas eve, you will find the animals on their knees.

EUSEBIA. And Shakspere will tell you that

> "Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our SAVIOUR'S Birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning croweth all night long."

PISTUS. A truer symbolism than any of the above is, I think, to be found in the hatred that all ages and nations have borne to serpents. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," seems to have been literally as well as metaphorically fulfilled.

SOPHRON. The symbolism of the chrysalis and the butterfly had been discovered long before the fall of paganism, as the Greek name for the latter plainly showed. It is a marvellously true emblem; almost sufficient to prove that which it represents.

THEODORA. It is growing late; we cannot enter on our next subject to-night. And we shall find it, I think, even more interesting than that of this evening.

PISTUS. Unless it be through our own faults. Good night.

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NIGHT III.

AERIAL APPARITIONS.

SOPHRON. It would be a curious subject of inquiry, why the inhabitants of mountainous regions are so much more given to believe in tales of supernatural incident, than those who live in the flatter and tame parts of the same country.

PISTUS. The habit of constant communion with nature in her deepest solitude has a necessary tendency to make the mind reverential. With such beauty and majesty continually before the eye, it seems almost to follow, that the power which made and sustains all these things must be also recognized; a kind of perpetual converse with the unseen world is maintained; and, where nothing of human littleness may be visible in the course of a long day, the traveller naturally turns his thought to those unseen companions whom he believes to be accompanying him. So much for the moral grounds. Then for the physical; the wonderful phenomena of light and shade; the extraordinary sounds which are familiar to mountain ears; the opening out of a new kind of land-

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scape, fantastical beyond the wildest valleys of earth—I mean cloud scenery; the hours of intense stillness; the clearness and brightness of the atmosphere; the lightness of the air; the necessity of observing those little signs of approaching tempest which a common eye and ear would fail to catch; all these things may be, in part, the cause of this—superstitious, to use the modern phrase—feeling in mountaineers.

SOPHRON. And not only so; but there is no doubt that constant association with magnificent scenes calls out all the affections of the mind in their full force. Wilberforce, I think, somewhere remarks, that he always seemed to love his friends better in a mountainous country than any where else; and doubtless it was more than seeming.

PISTUS. Sailors also, who, though in a different manner, are conversant with the most sublime scenes, are naturally credulous of supernatural tales. And it is curious that, both in their case and in that of mountaineers, this feeling should be united with great physical courage; whereas soldiers who are, in time of peace, usually immured in towns, and, in that of war, are most commonly located in flat and uninteresting countries, are given to scepticism rather than superstition.

EUSEBIA. Yet sometimes they will exhibit great sensitiveness to natural scenery. The German troops, who, in the rising of 1745, were advancing on Inverness, could hardly be prevailed on to enter

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the pass of Killicrankie, so terrified were they at the stupendous height of its mountains.

PISTUS. Closely connected with this is the almost invincible desire which many persons feel to precipitate themselves from the summit of a high place. There is a precipice in Sky where tourists are usually held by their guides, lest its dizzy height should induce them to throw themselves over.

THEODORA. I should think it probable that some, at least, of the suicides committed from the top of the Monument, were the effect of the same feeling. In cases where the person who thus destroyed himself was actuated by no known cause, and appeared in good spirits at the time of his ascent, it is not only most charitable, but really also most likely, that he should have been carried away by the frantic desire that most persons, in a slight degree, have felt.

SOPHRON. It is well known that there are places in the Alps, and in the Andes, where such panics are not unusual, and where they are almost certain death. The only remedy in such cases is, to look up; and if you can do that steadily for a few moments you are saved.

PISTUS. Yes; if it is into the clear blue open sky; but (I can speak from my own experience) there are cases where the looking up makes bad worse. If a precipice towers above you on one side, while it yawns beneath you on the other, the additional height does but distress you the

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more; and if, besides this, light fleecy clouds are flitting rapidly over the summit, it is dizzy work indeed.

EUSEBIA. It must be:—it turns the brain to stand, on a March day, at the bottom of a church tower, and, looking up steadily to the vane, to watch it as the clouds drive past it. To do so without feeling giddy requires a very steady head indeed.

PISTUS. I believe that people with the strongest nerves have the most dreadful fits of panic when they have them at all. I have wandered far and wide in the most precipitous places of mountains, and never felt it but once. I had a mind to try if the Pico do Cidrão, one of the loftiest and, at the same time, steepest mountains of Madeira, could not be scaled from the Pico dos Arrieiros. It was a fine day in spring: we tethered our horses on the Arrieiros, and then, with our mountain poles and a shepherd for guide, we committed ourselves to the narrow isthmus that joins the two mountains. Narrow it is; for on either side it slopes down almost perpendicularly into an abyss of some two thousand feet, while, at the top, it is in many places not more than eight feet broad, and its material of crumbling scoria. Indeed, so thin is it, that it vibrates or seems to vibrate in a heavy gale. When we had accomplished half the distance, we sat down to rest, and gaze at the wonderful chasms which opened below us. Seeing a small crack in the earth,

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I looked down into that, and lo! the opposite chasm was distinctly visible through it. At last, however, up ladders of rock, assisted by the shepherd's banisters of roughly-spun rope, round corners where you trusted yourself to the young oak or the sapling *til*, and hung for a moment over a depth that it makes my blood run cold to recollect,—now creeping along this side of the isthmus, now working like worms along that, we stood under the shadow of the great Cidrão itself. Here, on a little platform of turf, my friend sat down, weary and sick at heart, while I resolved, with a good courage, still to follow my guide. On we went: the path was a ledge of about eighteen inches,—a steep precipice above, a steep precipice below,—all bare rock,—no twining root or friendly twig to give the hand a firm, nor even an imaginary hold. Just then the northern gale swept a mass of clouds into the abyss, and it seemed as if we were walking along the edge of the world. I began to feel a little uncomfortable, when my guide, by way of consoling me, wrenched a large rock from its place, and hurled it downwards into the clouds. I lost it in that soft bed; but half a minute afterwards its crash came up from beneath, echoed from crag to crag, and seeming as if it came from another world. Oh, I shall never forget that moment! My brain seemed to turn round, my limbs to have no power of support, and I felt that horrible desire of leaping after the rock, the descent of which I had just

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witnessed. That was my only panic, and I thought it would have been my first and last.

THEODORA. This, and cases like this, are the most undoubted instances where the influence of external nature has a visible and physical effect. The great question is, to what immediate cause are we to attribute it?

SOPHRON. If you ask my opinion, I have long believed it to be the immediate effect of temptation. The name, *panic*, proves that the spirits who were supposed to haunt wild and lonely scenery, were also supposed to be gifted with an extraordinary influence over the mind; just as in Gothic lore fairies were gifted with the same power of depriving their unwelcome visitants of reason. Now that the evil spirits by which we are surrounded should delight in making GOD'S works, which in themselves are very good, occasions of the misery of man, is extremely likely in itself, and consonant with all analogy. We do not remember, or we will not believe, that the presence of Christians must make an inroad on the powers of darkness; that they cannot exercise the same influence over mankind in such regions, as in wild and lonely mountains, which Holy Church can scarcely be said to have vindicated;—almost inaccessible to men,—intended, to the end of the world, to be none of his, to whomever else they may be given. By general consent there is an intrinsic connexion between night and evil. All nations have then thought wicked spirits

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to have most power:—at nightfall it is, that, by universal agreement of mankind, appearances from the other world do almost always occur; and every one must have felt how inimitably true is Shakspere,—

> "Good things of day begin to droop and drouse,
> While night's fell agents to their prey do rouse."

It is from a natural horror of the dark that children will cry in it; and the nearer that men approach to a state of nature, the more do they shrink from it as from an evil thing. You may get over your dislike to it, and so you may to any other ill object; but from the beginning of the world, allegorically and physically, it has been connected with the idea of sin. A deed of darkness, and powers of darkness, carry their meaning in their face. Now, it is in its solitude, its negative of life and action, its separation of man from man, its individualizing human beings, by keeping each from aiding or being aided by his brother, —all the features, in short, in which night is evil, that it resembles the lonely scenes of which we speak. True; there is a brighter side to the picture. Angels may delight in solitudes unstained by sin; and peaks like those of Chimboraço and Himalaya may be, could we only hear it, vocal with the songs of the just made perfect. But still it is a solemn thought that the doom has been once spoken, which, till the regeneration of the heavens and earth by fire, must remain in

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some sense in force: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." The Church, we know, has a power of reversing this curse; but till she has blest, it remains and must remain. The sorest temptations which the history of the Church can recount, have taken place in the desert; also, I grant you, some of the most glorious victories. We must expect the one, we may hope for the other.

PISTUS. It seems to me that it is very difficult to carry on such speculations without falling into one of two dangers: pantheism or materialism. A pantheist will grant all you have been saying; he, too, will speak of the ministry of angels, and, perhaps, the assaults of less happy spirits; but then his angels will be the sweet whisper of the wind, the bright contrasts of light and shade, the dewy forest, or the glorious landscape; while his ill spirits are but the natural effects of gloomy valleys and frowning rocks; of barren wastes and desolate sands. This doctrine we all reject with horror. But, then, is it not to materialize our notions of the blessed angels, to imagine them to take delight in earthly beauty, they who have so glorious a Land of their own? And, again, is it not to undervalue the strength of our ghostly enemies, to imagine them desirous of,—or standing in need of,—physical advantages of situation?

SOPHRON. I think not. Think only of the analogy between the revelation that we have of heaven, and the nature, as we know it, of this earth. In the first place, none can deny, that after

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the resurrection and the final judgment, the just made perfect will not be, as angels, simply spiritual essences, but be endowed, as when on earth, with material bodies. Now material beings necessarily presuppose a material locality: material sight would be simply useless unless there were material substances to see, material hearing unless there were material sounds to hear. This obviates one great objection to what I am saying; that the whole apocalyptic description is only the lowering of heavenly ideas to earthly minds. If a merely spiritual state were being described, doubtless it would so be; but when (to say the least) much that is material must be mixed up with it, the argument vanishes. Consider, again, the remarkable terms in which the abode of the elect is mentioned, after the final doom: "a new heaven and a new earth." And lest any one should think that this is a merely casual expression of S. John, (granting that such things might be,) S. Peter also, and Isaiah, speak of "new heavens and a new earth." If, now, there were no analogy between the old and the new, between the first and the second earth, to what purpose this particular and thrice repeated expression? And most remarkably is it said, "there was no more sea." There is therefore so strong a resemblance between the two earths, that the absence of the sea in the second is thought a point worthy of note. Therefore, all the varieties of natural beauty besides this, it may be pre-

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sumed, still will exist. If of one thing in a series it be recorded that it is abolished, the natural presumption about the others is, that they remain. And, in the mystical descriptions of heaven with which Holy Scripture abounds, we find frequent reference to the other most remarkable components of earthly scenery. To trees; for there is the Tree of life;—to mountains; for there is the utmost bound of the everlasting Hills;—to lakes, for there the glorious LORD will be a place of broad streams;—to rivers, for there is the River of the water of life. Surely it is impossible to believe that these things are purely metaphorical; nor can it even be said that the expressions are used in a sacramental sense. How is it possible to imagine immaterial beauty, which bears a close analogy to material, and yet is fitted for material beings? And if not, the closeness of the similitude between heaven and earth is only to be known to those Blessed Ones who know even as they are known.

THEODORA. Hence, then, you would conclude, that if the souls of the righteous may after the general resurrection find their happiness increased by a beauty in all points like the beauty of earth, differing from it only in transfiguration or beatification, not in spiritualization; which souls, nevertheless, are not material, though acting through a material medium, and are not impaired in vigour by their connexion with that medium, but on the contrary, derive fresh happiness and

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excellence from their union, or rather re-union with it; then, at this present time, angelic spirits may well be supposed to delight in earthly and material loveliness, and that without any materialization of our notion of those pure and bodiless essences.

SOPHRON. Such is the inference I would draw; and with what sanctity does it invest the beauty of this world! "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels," may thus be true of man, not only as regards his own nature, but in some degree also as taken in reference to the physical substances by which he is surrounded, and with which he is brought into contact. That is one branch of our difficulty. Now let us consider that with reference to evil spirits. Can it be denied that solitude has always exposed those who have sought it to fiercer temptations? And have they not, as S. Antony, obtained the greater glory in overcoming them? Even our Blessed LORD Himself was led up into the wilderness, before He was assaulted by our great enemy. And in such desolate and gloomy places did the demoniacs live,—"always he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones." Nor must we pass over the fact, that the swine, when permitted to be possessed, were violently hurried down a steep place into the sea, as if by a remarkable analogy with the desire of self-destruction, to which we have just been alluding.

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THEODORA. We may draw, then, two conclusions from what has been said. The one, that in scenes of desolation and loneliness the mind would be most likely to be open to supernatural impressions; the other, that in the same scenes such impressions would be most likely to be conveyed to the mind.

SOPHRON. We shall find that this is well borne out by experience, and that, in many ways, such supernatural expressions may be traced, and have been recorded.

PISTUS. Another observation should also be made, namely, that it is in these very situations that we may most often be at a loss to determine whether an appearance be supernatural, or whether it can be explained on any known principle.

SOPHRON. I grant you, it is just here that physical phenomena are likely to be most strange. Let us endeavour to remember a few examples.

PISTUS. The lights which are sometimes seen in lonely places are very curious. It is well known that in a cross-road near, I think, Lostwithiel, in Cornwall, there is a stationary light which always kindles itself at night, at the same height from the ground, of the same colour, form, and size; neither is there any discoverable physical reason, such as a grotto or chasm whence gas might issue, by which the phenomenon can be explained. It is also well known, that on the wildest heights and headlands of Madeira, at

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night, but especially on stormy nights, lights are seen to glance up and down the most inaccessible precipices, where the foot of man never has been, nor ever, till the general doom, will be; leaping from crag to crag over intervening ravines and chines: sometimes almost mingling with the sea rocks, sometimes shooting up to the very brow of the cliff. The fishermen believe them to be tormented souls, thus working out part of their punishment, and testify great horror at the apparition.

SOPHRON. Such lights have also been observed in places where they would least have been expected. There is a bed-room in Lulworth Castle, in Dorsetshire, where, on a particular spot on the wall, a pale phosphoric light is always to be seen, when the windows are darkened. I have heard, that to wake in the stillness of the night, and to see this pale light glaring quietly on you, is a most unpleasant thing. And so the proprietors thought, for they had the wall pulled down and rebuilt, but to no effect: the light appeared again, and is to be seen there to this day.

PISTUS. A man that shall travel much in the Highlands, must be hard of belief indeed, if he do not give credit to the tales which he hears of corpse lights. The belief is strongest in the Hebrides; that a light of about the brightness and apparent diameter of a horn lantern may be seen, occasionally, to move along the road which leads to the church, sometimes stopping,

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and never going fast. Along this same road, within a few days, a funeral, they say, is certain to pass.

THEODORA. So also the Dee has acquired the epithet of "the holy," because it is said that, whenever a Christian is drowned in its waters, a light appears above the place where his body lies, till it is recovered.

PISTUS. Mr. Dendy, in his very interesting Philosophy of Mystery, tells us, that some years ago, the inhabitants of Borthwen, near Barmouth, were surprised by seeing, one night, a number of lights dancing over the estuary of their river. Gradually all disappeared but one, and that one settled on a boat then, with its owner, in the stream. A few days afterwards, her owner was lost in her.

SOPHRON. No one, that has not seen it, can imagine how precisely the motions of the appearance called Jack-a-Lantern, or Will-o'-th'-Wisp, resemble those of a man with a lantern. On a wide moor, sometimes it will seem to run very fast in a straight line,—then it will stop, as if perplexed, and move a few yards backwards and forwards, a little higher or a little lower, as if the person that carried it were doubtful of his way,—then, as having found it, off goes the light again, keeping the same height from the ground, and, as it were, held steadily. It is almost impossible to believe it other than it seems, till (if you know the ground) you observe that it has crossed a

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piece of water, or some quagmire that you know to be impassable, and there ends the deception. Sometimes, however, these Wills-o'-th'-Wisp are stationary. I have myself seen one that would make a very pretty picture: standing on a rustic bridge that crosses a puny stream near its source, where ashes and willows bend over the well-head that bubbles up at a little distance, and the long grass and the red sorrel skirt its clear basin, making a little nook or shrine for the birth-place of the stream, I have seen on a dark and cloudy night a perfect little sun, shooting out its rays on all sides, and hanging immediately over the fountain. The effect of this fairy light on the dewy leaves that dipped themselves in the water, on the old moss-covered bridge, and on the ripples of the stream itself, were very lovely.

PISTUS. Of a less innocent kind was the celebrated Harlech meteor of 1694. Between Harlech and the Caernarvonshire side of the Traeth Bychan intervenes a low range of marsh land, running up some way into the country. Just before Christmas, 1693, a pale blue light was observed to come across the sea, apparently from the Caernarvonshire coast, and moving slowly from one part of the neighbouring country to another, to fire all the hay-ricks and some of the barns which it approached. It never appeared but at night. At first the country people were terrified at it; at length, taking courage, they ventured boldly close to it, and sometimes into it, to save, if it might

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be, their hay. As summer came on, instead of appearing almost every night, its visits were confined to once or twice a week, and almost always on Saturday or Sunday. It now began to cease from firing ricks, but was hurtful in another manner; for it poisoned all the grass on which it rested, and a great mortality of cattle and sheep ensued. At length it was traced to a place called Morvabychan, in Caernarvonshire, a sandy and marshy bay, about nine miles distant from Harlech. Storm or fine weather seemed to make no difference to this meteor; but any loud noise, as shouting, firing guns, blowing horns, appeared to prevent its doing mischief. It was seen for the last time in the August of 1694.

EUSEBIA. We must not forget, among the aerial apparitions which have been most noted, those well-attested instances of fiery armies combating in the air, which have preceded battles. Night after night, before the destruction of Jerusalem, armies were seen fighting in the clouds: no one can doubt that this was one of the many signs by which the capture of that city was foretold.

PISTUS. The night before the battle of Ivry, not only was the combat of two armies seen, in a kind of halo of clouds; but the respective lines of the Leaguers and the Royalists, nay, even the persons of the principal chiefs could be recognized, and the white horse on which Henry IV. did such deeds of valour was distinguished and observed.

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And this apparition was visible to thousands at the same time.

THEODORA. Something similar is said to have occurred before the persecution of the Waldenses, in the seventeenth century. Armies were then seen in the clouds; strange luminous appearances were observed over the churches; the bells rang without mortal hands; and a blue lambent flame hung over the churchyards.

PISTUS. I will read you, out of Fox, the signs and prodigies which happened before the massacre in the Valteline:—

"The Protestants having appointed guards and sentinels in the steeples of the churches of the Valteline, besides others which were commanded to watch in certain places, to give the sign by fire, to the intent that the whole valley, being warned partly by the beacons, partly by the sound of the bells, might together be ready on the sudden to take arms for their defence against the Spaniard, if he should make any incursion upon the valley. About the calends of May, 1620, in Soudres, the foresaid sentinels reported, that in a night, as they watched, they heard, in the church of [S.] Gervase, a murmuring as it were of many persons, with great earnestness and vehemency of arguing and contesting among themselves; and from the church there shined upwards through the steeple a great brightness, insomuch as the sentinels lighted their torches, and assembled themselves to go down into the

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church to see what the matter might be. But as they were descending down the stairs, their lights were put out; and returning afresh to light their torches, they were put out again with greater strength and with much astonishment and trembling; and the brightness which filled the church suddenly vanished; the weights also of the great clock fell down, and they heard about ten knells of a bell, in such manner as it useth to ring to give the alarm; the which was heard by very many.

"Likewise in Tyrane there were heard the like knells by the great bell; and the magistrate commanded them suddenly to go and know the cause; but he found that it was not done by the act of men; and instantly the servants running from the belfry, and diligently attending to see this business, they discerned a thing like a cat to descend down into the place.

"Signs and prodigies heard and seen in the Valteline after the massacre, as hath been affirmed by divers persons of credit, being departed from the said valley, and lying in the Valteline after the massacre. In the Protestant church, and principally in Teglio and Tyrane, a voice hath been heard to cry, 'Woe, woe, woe unto you. The vengeance of GOD is upon you for the blood of the innocent.'

"Moreover, there was heard the bell of the evangelick church of Tyrane to ring even at the same time that the sermon was used to be; and

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in that church a voice was heard, like the voice of Signor Antonio Basso, who sometimes had been there a minister, and was murdered in the said place, as if himself had been preaching in the same place.

"In Soudres there was seen to descend an army from the mountains, every way furnished; which sight was the cause that many took their flight and departed out of Soudres; but suddenly this apparition vanished like a cloud. The which struck a great terror into the minds of the people, insomuch that many departed out of the valley, as men that feared a castigation and punishment from heaven[1]."

SOPHRON. On the night succeeding the bombardment of Acre, in 1839, coruscations, like hieroglyphics, were seen by the English crew, on the mountains to the east of that town. This appears to bear some resemblance to the preceding accounts[2].

PISTUS. But the most remarkable, and at the same time one of the most apparently useless apparitions of this kind, occurred at Boulogne a few years since. I have it from an eye-witness. An English family, resident there during the summer, were walking on the terrace before their house one afternoon, watching the coming on of a magnificent thunderstorm; and, as was natural, the conversation turned on tempests. Some one

[1] Fox, vol. iii. p. 406. [2] Williams' Jerusalem, p. 179.

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having mentioned the celebrated storm of Nov. 26, 1703, some of its disastrous effects were related. The storm meanwhile came on, and as it was unaccompanied by rain, the party still continued out of doors. All at once, an exclamation from one of the children caused them to look up; and there, through a kind of broken ellipse of clouds, they saw, in fiery characters, the numerals, 1703. Nor (as one might say with good S. Cyril yesterday) did the phenomenon vanish at once. It remained steady long enough to enable my informants to attempt a sketch of it. And afterwards, when several members of the party were requested to sketch it from memory, they all formed the numerals the same way, thus

1703

the 3 being of the old-fashioned kind. So wonderful a story I should not have ventured to relate to you, were I not perfectly well acquainted with those to whom it happened; and, from the number of concurrent witnesses, it is as impossible that they should have been deceived themselves, as that they should attempt to deceive others.

SOPHRON. We shall have, ere long, to consider the question of the general uselessness of apparitions, and whether any argument can be drawn against their credibility on that score. Your story is certainly a curious one, however. Of such apparitions, we must not forget the remarkable occurrence which preceded the battle of Campo d'Ourique. Count Affonso was warned by

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a vision, the night before this great engagement, which arrested for ever the Moorish dominion in Portugal, that if he went forth when the bell sounded for mass on the following morning, he should receive a sign of his success from GOD. As his host numbered but ten thousand men, while that of the infidels was computed at three hundred thousand, he felt that he could scarcely be saved unless by a miraculous interference. He went forth at the appointed signal. It was a cloudy sunrise, and he gazed in vain expectation for some few moments. At length a whirlwind seemed to arise in the east; the clouds were heaped and whirled together in all manner of fantastical shapes; and gradually a space of clear blue sky presented itself in the midst of them. In this the Count beheld the Crucified SAVIOUR, and all the host of Heaven encircling Him with adoration. And at the same time a voice was heard promising him victory over his foes, the royal title, and a succession of sixteen generations to inherit his throne. This story has been critically examined by Padre Antonio Pereira, a scholar of great and deserved eminence in antiquities, as well as in ecclesiastical literature; and the result of his inquiry is, that there are not sufficient grounds in the arguments of objectors to make its credibility at all doubtful.

THEODORA. Such appearances as those of the great spectre of the Brocken, though strictly natural, must have a most supernatural effect.

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PISTUS. They must: I have been witness to one such on a smaller scale. I was standing with a friend on an African mountain, and gazing into an abyss or crater that lay stretched at our feet. It was filled with white foam-like clouds, piled up orderlessly one on the other. As we looked, the sun came out over head, and we saw far below us a vast shadow of ourselves, the head encircled with a white nimbus, like the glory that surrounds the heads of the beatified. Near the same spot, a traveller, shortly before, had seen himself and his horse reflected in the same manner, the nimbus surrounding the animal and its rider.

SOPHRON. Another kind of these aerial appearances is spoken of in Germany and in Scotland. In Argyllshire there is a belief, that towards nightfall an armed band will be seen occasionally, riding full speed along the almost precipitous sides of mountains accessible but to the goat, or to the well-trained mountaineer, but which it would be certain death to horse and rider to ascend. And as we all know, a belief of the same kind prevails in the Harzforest, that in the stillness of those vast solitudes a sound will sometimes be heard of a hunter's chase,—the baying of hounds, the clatter of steeds, the cheering of riders, the winding of horns; all gradually growing louder and nearer, and then, by the same gradual steps, dying off into stillness, as if the chase were gone by.

THEODORA. One can wonder at nothing in such

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deep forest solitudes in the way of imaginary (if imaginary) sounds. Can any thing material be more like spiritual melody than the sighing of a pine grove in a summer air—the "soul-like sound" of Coleridge? It seems so to realize and to illustrate that noble description in Holy Scripture where David is forbidden to go forth against the Philistines till he hears "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees;" as if then an angelic battalion was going forth to battle in his behalf.

PISTUS. I remember, on a winter afternoon, at that most lovely of times, a frosty sunset, I was descending one of the hills near the borders of Surrey and Sussex. There was no sensible breeze; and as I wound down into the valley, the evening sky here and there ruffled into billows of grey splendour, the motionless leaves that strewed my path, and the silence of approaching night, were very solemn. Presently I reached a spot where, on my left hand, was a deep cutting through sandstone; and at the top of the bank three firs, with not a single branch along their straight stems, threw up their heads into the twilight air. And from that far-off tuft of branches there came down such faint and sweet melody, that I could only think with Dr. Donne, "LORD, LORD, what delights must Thou have prepared for Thy servants in heaven, if Thou providest such ravishing music for bad men on earth!"

EUSEBIA. The astonishingly supernatural effect

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of wind is no where more curious than in ranges of open downs, such as lie between Christchurch Twynam, and Wimborne Minster, which are dotted here and there with aged thorns or stunted oaks. As you stand at the bottom of the hill, all may be silent; presently you hear an old thorn near the summit rushing and roaring in the gale, then one a hundred yards to your right will creak its branches together, and rustle more loudly; then a solitary oak to your left; as if each, in its turn, took up a conversation with the breeze, and complained of its hard usage.

PISTUS. There is nothing more overpowering in the way of sound than the continual roar of a stream over a bed of rocks, as you pursue your solitary way up a mountain glen. It is amusing at first, then it becomes irksome; then, as you get further and further from the abodes of man, and the precipices grow wilder, and the mountains darker, there is something perfectly awful in the voice of the stream; nor can I conceive any thing more likely to deprive a man of his senses than continual exposure to such a sound in such a scene.

EUSEBIA. We were to talk, I think, of those cases in which storms and hurricanes have been supposed to prefigure any great change, more especially the death of illustrious men.

SOPHRON. There are some well-known instances of this: Oliver Cromwell's birth, for example, was attended by a tremendous tempest; so also

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was his death. And there is a curious example of a similar kind in the Irish annals. In 1343, on the 13th of July, Sir Ralph Ufford came to Dublin as Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. The weather, which had been remarkably fine that summer, immediately became foul, and continued so during the whole time that he held that office. He oppressed the native Irish; he robbed clergy and laity; he did injustice to rich and poor. After nearly three years' ill government, he died universally hated; and no sooner was he dead than the tempestuous weather ceased, and the three years' continued wet was changed to a cloudless season.

PISTUS. We are told that at Zurich, in the year 1280, while a sermon was being delivered at the shrine of SS. Felix and Regula, the patrons of the church, a tremendous clap of thunder was heard in a clear sky, and that some few days after the greater part of the city was consumed by an accidental fire, and the inhabitants were put under the ban of the empire. In the year 1440 a similar clap of thunder was heard in the same town; and was followed shortly after by the civil war which Zurich carried on for more than seven years against the other cantons.

SOPHRON. I remember also that, before the battle fought between the Swiss troops and the Dauphin's army, during the time of the Council of Basle, under the walls of that city, for several nights strange noises are said to have been heard

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round and upon the spot of the future engagement, the cries of warriors, and the shock of armies [1].

PISTUS. Voices, too, heard in lonely places, are frequently recorded. At the moment that Leo of Constantinople was slain, the crew of a ship at sea heard the words, "This night hath Leo been murdered." What more magnificent, too, than the voice which was heard from the deep solitude of the Holy of Holies, at that last Pentecost, "Let us depart hence!"

THEODORA. The Arabs believe that, in the Wilderness of Sin, at the time of matins, a bell may be heard as if summoning to prayer, and that this has been the case ever since the Crusades.

SOPHRON. If from this we turn our attention to celestial phenomena, properly so called, we shall find no small weight of Scriptural authority for expounding them, as being connected in some mysterious manner with "the changes and chances of this mortal life." It can hardly be without some further intent than that of a mere metaphor, that signs in the sun, and moon, and stars are so often coupled with distress of nations, with wars and rumours of wars. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken." "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the

[1] Felix Malleolus, de Nobilit. cap. 26. 33.

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stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring." And again how often in the Apocalypse: "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as the fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." And again, "The third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars: so as the third part of them was darkened." And in accordance with all this, we know it to have been the opinion of the medieval Church, that the last Judgment would be preceded by fifteen days of peculiar celestial prodigies.

PISTUS. That comets have appeared before great events is a thing which is hardly capable of proof, because it will be immediately and most truly answered, that some of the most remarkable comets have announced nothing at all. I am not aware that the comet of 1680 is capable of explanation in the way of prophecy, nor is that of 1843. The former of these had appeared thrice before within the annals of history. It was the same that was seen immediately after the death of Julius Cæsar; that appeared again in the reign of Justinian, before the most terrific plague which history records; that a third time manifested itself during the heat of the Crusades. All these three apparitions have not unnaturally been connected with the remarkable events by which they

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were attended; not to mention that a previous appearance of the same comet very probably accompanied, if it did not occasion, the flood.

SOPHRON. And (what must have been at least as striking as the comet) you should notice the remarkable paleness of the sun which accompanied the comets of Julius Cæsar and Justinian.

THEODORA. Again, we are told that the comet which appeared before the great plague of London was pale, sickly, and ghastly; that its motion was slow, and that it glared with a death-like paleness; whereas that which preceded the Fire, was of a bright fiery radiance, rapid in its course, angry looking, and very terrible. It was reputed, also, to hang like a drawn sword over the devoted city.

PISTUS. That, however, can hardly fail to be fancied by any spectator. I was in Portugal when the great comet of 1843 appeared, which you here in England scarcely saw; but there it was magnificent, and I should think nearly equal to that of 1680. I can assure you that to see it night after night hang over the city in which I was living, quite gave the idea of the sword of Divine vengeance threatening it.

SOPHRON. After all, what more astonishing in the belief that comets should prefigure danger, than in that, which we know to be the fact, that certain phases of the moon, or crises of the revolution of the earth, do not only prefigure, but actually occasion, the changes of the condition of

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human bodies? We all know that, in dying persons, if the hours of twelve, three, six, or nine be passed, we expect the sufferer to linger on to the next critical time. At the same time, also, the crises of diseases generally occur; and sailors have a belief, if a comrade is dying, that he cannot pass till the time of high water. Again, it is also clear, that the change of the moon has a great influence on the symptoms of madmen: who will venture to explain why?

EUSEBIA. It is getting late; and we are approaching a very interesting part of our subject: shall we postpone it till to-morrow night?

SOPHRON. We will do so.

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NIGHT IV.

WARNINGS OF APPROACHING DEATH.

SOPHRON. We have need, again and again, to remind ourselves, as we pursue this discussion, that what has been superstitiously exaggerated may, nevertheless, be credibly believed. Nothing more ludicrous, nothing more vulgar, nothing more pitiable, than the credit which some attach to omens; and verily I believe that Satan is sometimes permitted to verify one or two, that the sin of believers in such kind of signs may bring its own punishment.

PISTUS. I think so too: there are well-authenticated stories of the most absurd omens having been proved true by the event, in a way which can hardly be the effect of chance, but which may thus be very plausibly, if not probably, explained.

SOPHRON. I will give you an instance. Who can suppose that the vulgar ideas of the appearance of certain birds portending certain events, is any thing more than gross superstition, and, as such (unless through invincible ignorance), a mor-

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tal sin? Yet I knew a gentleman to whom a most remarkable example of a fulfilled omen occurred. He was out with his wife on their wedding tour, when, behold! six magpies appeared together. "Well," said my friend, smiling, "we know the old saw—

> "'One for sorrow, two for mirth,
> Three for a funeral, four for a birth.'

So, on that principle, we ought to hear of two funerals." "I suppose we ought," continued the lady, and nothing more was said on the subject; but they had not driven on more than a few moments, when a man rode towards them at full speed, and reined in his horse as he approached the chaise. "What's the matter?" demanded my friend. "A most shocking thing has just occurred," replied the man. "Two of Mr. ——'s sons (who live over there)," and he pointed to the place, "have just been drowned in a pond in the park; they are using all the means to bring them round, and I am riding to —— for the surgeon." With which he struck spurs into his horse, and galloped on. And as my friend was accustomed, very justly, to observe, not the least wonderful part of the story is, that a perfect stranger should, apparently without any definite cause, have stopped to relate the accident then.

PISTUS. We ought to look on such an event as a trial of the faith of the person to whom it happened. And no doubt your friend was bound, if

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ever he again saw six or sixty magpies, to look on the appearance as perfectly meaningless and harmless; and in this way to make good the cause of faith against superstition, no less its deadly foe than scepticism.

THEODORA. You do not class with this story such remarkable accounts as those given by Lord Clarendon about the death of the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Pembroke?

PISTUS. Assuredly not. We have good evidence for them: and I ask only for such evidence as would warrant my believing any tale against which an antecedent improbability lay.

EUSEBIA. But what are the accounts? I do not remember them.

SOPHRON. I will read you that given by Mr. Douch with respect to Sir George Villiers, rather than Clarendon's, because it seems more exact; and you can look at the other at your leisure any day. "Some few days before the duke's going to Portsmouth, where he was stabbed by Felton, the ghost of his father, Sir George Villiers, appeared to one Parker, formerly his own servant, but then servant to the duke, in his morning gown, charging Parker to tell his son that he should decline that employment and design he was going upon, or else he would certainly be murdered. Parker promised the apparition to do it, but neglected it. The duke making preparations for his expedition to Rochelle, the apparition came again to Parker, taxing him very se-

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verely for his breach of promise, and required him not to delay the acquainting of his son of the danger he was in. Then Parker the next day tells the duke that his father's ghost had twice appeared to him, and had commanded him to give him that warning. The duke slighted it, and told him he was an old doating fool. That night the apparition came to Parker a third time, saying, 'Parker, thou hast done well in warning my son of his danger; but, though he will not yet believe thee, go to him once more however, and tell him by such a token,' naming a private token, 'which nobody knows but only he and I, that if he will not decline this voyage, such a knife as this is,' pulling a long knife out from under his gown, 'will be his death.' This message Parker also delivered the next day to the duke, who when he heard the private token believed that he had it from his father's ghost, yet said that his honour was now at stake, and that he could not go back from what he had undertaken, come life, come death. These three several appearances of the apparition to Mr. Parker were always at midnight, when he was reading some book. This fact Parker, after the duke's murder, communicated to his fellow-servant, Henry Ceeley, who told it to a reverend divine, a neighbour of mine, from whose mouth I have it. This Henry Ceeley has not been dead above twenty years, and his habitation for several years before his death was at North Cerney, in Somersetshire. My friend,

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the divine aforesaid, was an intimate acquaintance of this Henry Ceeley's, and assures me he was a person of known truth and integrity." That is the story; and the only circumstance which seems suspicious about it is easily to be explained. It would appear that Parker did not communicate the apparition to Ceeley till after the duke's murder: but it would also appear that other people had been told of it before. Clarendon, so much used to investigate evidence, was so much convinced of this story as to insert it in his history. It may also be seen at much greater length in "Lilly's Observations on the Life and Death of King Charles I.:" not that this is any testimony to its truth.

EUSEBIA. And yet how many difficulties arise, unless you make it a mere question of evidence! How much more natural, one should say, how certainly much more effectual, would it have been had Sir George Villiers appeared to his son, rather than to his servant! Strange, too, that if he could foresee his son's death in the event of going, he could not foresee his son's determination to go!

PISTUS. What are we, that we should presume to decide on the various causes that may operate on the motives, or limit the knowledge of a spiritual visitant? You may reject a great number of historical facts, if you once take to that species of reasoning. The story of Joseph will fall to the ground at once. Why did he not, you may ask,

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send some one into Canaan to gather intelligence of his family, instead of waiting twenty years and more till Providence brought them to him? And who can answer the question? It does seem, I confess, as if the phantom had taken the least likely means for accomplishing its immediate end: but who shall say that there were not other ends to be answered by this roundabout method of communication? Certainly the unwillingness of the messenger is a strong proof that he was convinced of the truth of his own tale.

SOPHRON. In other versions of the story it is added that Sir George Villiers commanded Parker himself to prepare for death, and that he accordingly shortly afterwards did die. The death of the Duke of Buckingham was also foretold by a Scotch seer, and darkly foreshadowed by a dream of the Countess of Denbigh, his sister.

THEODORA. The other story is one of a more ordinary kind. I will read it you from Clarendon. "A short story may not be unfitly inserted, it being very frequently mentioned by a person of known integrity, whose character is here undertaken to be set down, and who, at that time, being on his way to London, met at Maidenhead some persons of quality of relation or dependence upon the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Charles Morgan, commonly called General Morgan, who had commanded an army in Germany, and defended Stoad, Dr. Feïld, then Bishop of S. David's, and Dr. Chafin, the earl's then chaplain in his house,

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and much in his favour. At supper one of them drank a health to the lord steward, upon which another of them said, 'That he believed his lord was at that time very merry, for he had now outlived the day which his tutor, Sandford, had prognosticated upon his nativity he would not outlive; but he had done it now, for that was his birthday, which completed his age to fifty years.' The next morning, by the time they came to Colebrook, they met with the news of his death."

PISTUS. The story of Lord Lyttelton is in all respects similar. He was warned, he asserted, by a ghost, that on such a day, at twelve o'clock, he should die. The announcement preyed on his spirits; and his friends on the fatal day assembled to see the event. It was suggested to put the clock back, which was done; but at the true mid-day Lord Lyttelton died. I should think more of this story did I not fear that there were grounds for believing that Lord Lyttelton was determined to take poison, and thus had the means of accomplishing a prediction which he feigned for the purpose of giving his death a kind of notoriety.

EUSEBIA. The case might also have been so with Lord Pembroke; or, in both instances, excessive terror may have verified the prediction.

SOPHRON. Here is an instance of the same thing in which neither solution will serve. At one of Marlborough's battles, I think that of Ramillies, a young officer was engaged who had

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been intimate with Sir John Friend. I need not remind you that the latter was executed by William of Orange for adherence to the interests of the exiled family. He assured his friends that he should not survive the battle. At its conclusion, while the allied horse were pursuing the remains of the enemy, a knot of his acquaintance rallied him on his despondency, and congratulated him on his safety. "You speak," he replied, "as you think. I shall die yet." Scarcely had he said the words when the last cannon-ball fired by the vanquished army laid him dead on the spot. In his pocket was found a slip of paper, with these words, after a certain date: "Dreamed, or —— ——," (the blank was supposed to be intended for "was told by a spirit,") "that on May 22, 1706, Sir John Friend meets me." On that May 22 the battle of Ramillies was fought.

PISTUS. To this story, if properly authenticated, no reasonable objection can be offered. It is not often that one has written evidence of a presentiment of this kind.

SOPHRON. I suppose no one can doubt that simple presentiments—I mean such as could have no reason assigned for them—of death or misfortune, have occurred again and again.

> "The shadows
> Of great events pass on before the events,
> And in to-day already walks to-morrow."

An example of this came under my own know-

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ledge. A lady residing in the north of Sussex had occasion to leave her family for a few days, and to go up to London. One morning she was seized with an unaccountable and most distressing depression of spirits (her bodily health being perfectly good), which nothing seemed capable of alleviating or diverting. Her friends did all in their power to console her; but she repeated several times, "I am sure that some great misfortune is going to befal me." They persuaded her to join the rest of the family at dinner, and then proposed that she should go to the opera. She was most unwilling to do this, and every hour seemed to increase her agitation. Her friends, however, insisted; and she was going up stairs to dress, when a thundering knock was heard at the hall door. "I told you," she cried, "that I should receive some dreadful intelligence; and there it is." She was right: an express had been sent up to inform her that one of her children had been drowned in a pond in her garden. But such presentiments have generally been supposed to occur principally just before death; as if the soul, when about to fling away her earthly trammels, became repossessed of somewhat of her own higher power, and, as Waller so beautifully expresses it,

> "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new light through chinks that time has made."

The ancients held this strongly; none more so

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than Plato. Just before the death of Socrates he foretold, says his disciple, that a youth, then possessed of singular innocence and modesty, would end by abandoning himself to all manner of wickedness. And the event proved his words. Possidonius in like manner affirms, that a certain Rhodian, on his death-bed, predicted truly, with regard to six of his friends whose ages were nearly equal, who would be the first, who the second, and so on till the last, to die. These stories at least prove the feeling of the ancients on the subject. The prophecy of Huss is undoubted matter of history, and allowed by Catholics as well as by writers of his own sect. Just before the fatal pile was kindled (July 8, 1415), "To-day," he said, "you are going to burn a goose (so *Huss* signified in Bohemian); but a hundred years hence a swan will rise amongst you, and will sing you another kind of song; and yet, for all that, ye will let him go." Many persons, as every physician will tell you, have, during their last illness, foretold the exact hour of their departure. Christian of Denmark did so to his physician, Dr. Cornelius. James Sartellari, an astronomer of eminence, and physician to the emperor Rudolph II., foretold, on the second of December, 1589, that he should die on the tenth; and so it came to pass Thurneissen, also an astronomer of reputation, foretold his own death at Cologne, and requested to be buried by the side of Albertus Magnus; which was done accord-

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ingly[1]. One of the most extraordinary instances of such knowledge in modern times, was this. Lady Fanshawe's mother was seized with an illness which was believed to be mortal. She was exceedingly anxious to live, for the sake of superintending the education of her family; and several times, referring to the case of Hezekiah, prayed that her life might be spared, as his was, for fifteen years. She fell into a swoon or trance, which was at first believed to be mortal. On coming to herself she assured her friends that her prayer had been heard; that she should recover; and that her life would be prolonged fifteen, but only fifteen years. And so it was.

PISTUS. And so there are certain marks by which approaching death is supposed to be intimated to the friends of the person about to be taken away. One of the most common is the sudden change of a man's personal character, from lightheartedness to gloom; and more frequently still, from gloom and habitual taciturnity to excessively high and boisterous spirits. Then it is that, according to Scotch belief, a man is said to be "fey;" and in many cases of sudden death, the credence has been strangely verified.

SOPHRON. That change, whether of personal or physical qualities, is a very wonderful thing, if taken as a warning or intimation of the time when there can be no more change. Yet it is a

[1] Kornmannus, de Mirac. Mort. iv. 100.

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belief as old as the Greek physicians, that sometimes, a few moments before death, the face of the sufferer will assume a likeness to that of some one of his most intimate friends; a thing for which no plausible reason can be given. Other signs there are of approaching death, which at first sight seem to have no connexion with it, but which yet admit of a very satisfactory explanation. Such is the pulling and picking of the bedclothes, so well known to be an unmistakeable sign of dissolution. To an ignorant person this symptom seems quite arbitrary; but it is easily explained, as merely showing that the nervous system is entirely worn out.

EUSEBIA. I think all those dark mysterious glimpses given us of the other state when it borders on this, like the rim of the dark half of the moon that sometimes makes itself visible, are very solemn. That persons, in the act of departing from this world, do become sensible of the presence of spiritual beings, is surely certain. And I often think, what a marvellous moment that must be, when a dying man obtains the first faint consciousness of the existence of a world of spirits.

SOPHRON. Wonderful indeed! And yet perhaps it may be by no forced transition. You go into a room that appears to you perfectly dark; you stay a few moments, and gradually you become sensible to surrounding objects; and finally you see with perfect clearness: and yet at no one moment

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are you sensible that you are passing from darkness to light. I will give you another example of the faculties of a sick person being supernaturally developed by the approach of death. A young lady, whose friends I knew, was in the last stage of a consumption. Two of her sisters had been previously carried off by the same disease. She had also a brother in India, who, by the last accounts received, was well in health and successful in business. Two female relatives were sitting by the dying girl, one on either side of the bed, and each holding one of her pale emaciated hands in their own. Suddenly she raised herself in the bed, and looking towards its foot, exclaimed, her whole face brightening with joy, "Oh, Gertrude and Jane!" (the sisters whom she had lost) "and dear, dear Willie!" (the brother who was in India.) They were the last words she spoke. Shortly afterwards, intelligence arrived from India that the brother in question had also been taken away, and that previously to the death of his sister. Now, to my mind, this is one of the most satisfactory stories of the kind that I ever heard. To be sure, your rationalist may account for it easily enough, by hinting that to a dying person, when the mind is beginning to fail, nothing is more natural than that the appearance of some of those whom he has most loved should present itself. But if you look at it in the other light—if you consider that, *à priori*, there is no unlikelihood in the thought that the spirits of the departed faith-

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ful may be allowed to tend the death-beds of departing friends—how simple and how beautiful is the whole!

PISTUS. The nearest approach that man has ever made to the invisible world is probably in those persons who, having been to all appearance drowned, have been recovered on the use of the proper means. And what is singular is this; by all accounts, after the first short struggle is over, there is perfect consciousness, but no pain. It is said that every action of past life is borne in upon a drowning man's mind with perfect clearness; all rush on his memory together, yet each distinctly; and if there be any suffering, it is entirely the moral pain which may result from that retrospect; for there is no physical anguish. On the contrary, the prevailing sensation is an indescribable calm, accompanied by a pleasant green light, they say, like green fields: the agony begins with the attempt at resuscitation. It is believed that a gentleman, who occupies a distinguished place in scientific literature, and who is said to have been longer under water than any one who has ever been brought back to life, also, in a more remarkable degree than any one else, saw something of those "unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter." His intention, it is asserted, was to leave some account of them, which should appear as a posthumous work; but his friends, perhaps wisely, dissuaded him from it.

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SOPHRON. I have heard the story. And so, in the very instant of violent deaths, the sympathy between soul and body has sometimes been strongly manifested. Charles XII. of Sweden, when struck by a cannon-ball, at the siege of Frederickshall, must have been a dead man at that infinitesimal point of time at which he felt the blow; yet he was observed to clap his hand on his sword. So again, at the execution of Charlotte Corday, for the murder of Marat, when the headsman lifted up the head by its long hair, and gave it a blow, the face is said to have changed colour and to have frowned.

PISTUS. The most curious instance I have heard of a warning of death, occurred in a family who are not altogether unknown in the theological world. A young lady, whom we will call Miss A., was watching what was supposed to be the death-bed of her father. Most of the family were assembled in the house; for the physicians had given it as their opinion that Mr. A. had not long to live; but one brother was at Eton. One night, Miss A. dreamed that she was sitting by her father's side, and that all the family, including this absent brother, were in the room. A figure, exactly like the modern representation of death, a skeleton, with a dart, entered the room. Seeing Mr. A., it grappled with him; he opposed his spiritual antagonist; and a long and fearful struggle ensued. At length Mr. A. seemed to prevail, and to fling his enemy to the ground.

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On this the spectre started up, seized the brother I have mentioned, and after a short contest, brought him down. From that night Mr. A. continued to rally, till he was restored to perfect health; and the next post, or next but one, came intelligence that the brother at Eton had been drowned in the Thames near Windsor.

THEODORA. How difficult to explain this on the ordinary principle of explaining away supernatural occurrences! That Miss A. had been hoping her father might yet recover; had been comforting herself with the recollection of instances in which cases apparently as hopeless had terminated favourably; had been thinking (as, the explainer would say, she very naturally might) of her absent brother; had been recollecting the dangers to which a boy at a public school is liable; and had by an easy confusion, and by means of a somewhat excited imagination, compounded a dream out of all these various thoughts, which dream, by a not unlikely coincidence, was actually true.

PISTUS. Yes; and the interpreter of this coincidental arrangement would enunciate his discovery with as much gravity as if it were not much harder of belief than the supernaturalism of the original story.

SOPHRON. And yet how useless the interference here. Useless, I mean, to our ideas.

PISTUS. There are, however, accounts of such

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interferences which have manifestly their use. We know the tale of the German prince, who, in a full career of wickedness, dreamed that an angel appeared to him with a scroll, on which were inscribed the words, AFTER SEVEN. He awoke in horror, thinking that his life was doomed, and that seven days or seven weeks would end it. He set himself in earnest to the work of repentance: seven days passed, and he continued in good health; seven weeks,—still no change; seven months,—and he was perfectly himself: then he thought that seven years must be meant. The seven years passed, and he found himself raised to the imperial throne.

THEODORA. The mercy of such an ambiguous warning is here evident. But, perhaps, in the same way we may explain those in which the prediction has not been fulfilled.

SOPHRON. Of which, perhaps, the most remarkable instance is that which happened to the late Dr. Isaac Milner. His biographer gives the following account: "Some time before his appointment to the deanery of Carlisle, Dr. Milner dreamed that he was led by a friend through the different apartments of a large rambling old house, which he was given to understand would shortly belong to himself. After showing him several rooms, his conductor opened a door which proved to be the entrance to a steep stone staircase, and desired him to ascend. He did so; and

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on turning the corner at the top of this flight of steps, was suddenly arrested by the sight of a tombstone, bearing the inscription,

Here lieth
The Body of
Isaac Milner,
Who died
A. D.
. . . .

When, happily for himself, he could not discover; for in the extremity of his eager effort to read the date of the year, which he perceived was given, he awoke. This dream, striking as it was, gradually faded from Dean Milner's mind, and would probably in time have been entirely forgotten, but for a circumstance which strangely and forcibly recalled it to his recollection. On going over his deanery for the first time, in company, I think, with Dr. Paley, a door was thrown open which discovered a steep flight of stone steps leading to the tower, and so exactly resembling those which he had seen in his dream, that, as he always declared, when induced to mention the circumstance, he absolutely feared to ascend and turn the corner at the top, so strong was the impression that the tombstone would appear. Nor did he ever ascend that staircase with perfect indifference[1]."

Pistus. I know another singular example. A

[1] Milner's Life, p. 101.

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gentleman, whom I will call Mr. B., engaged in a large business in London, dreamed—I will not pretend to give you the exact dates, but only an approximation to them—that his wife would die on the 9th of September in the following year, and he himself on the 11th of October in the year succeeding that. He did not, I believe, pay much attention to the intimation; but towards the end of August his wife was taken ill, and actually died on the fatal 9th of September. Mr. B. now considered his own decease as certain, and sold his business at a great loss; took a cottage in the vicinity of town, and prepared for death. However, the day passed, and he found himself very well. When he had learnt to believe that the prediction would not be verified in him, he was much at a loss what to do in the way of business, he having given up all connexion with that to which he had been educated.

SOPHRON. There are some instances which one can hardly believe to have been more than coincidences. Such is that which Sir Walter Scott relates in his journal of Dubuison, a celebrated dentist of Edinburgh. Dr. Blair, the day before his death, met him, and made use of a peculiar expression to him. Some time after, Lord Melville met him on the same spot, and made use of the same expression. *He died the next day. On this Dubuison said—in jest, however—"I shall be the next, I suppose."+ He went home, was taken suddenly ill, and died almost immediately. An-

* [illegible]
+ [illegible]

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other such is recorded in the parish register of Garthorpe church, in Leicestershire. A poor man presented himself for the purpose of being married; but, instead of the words, "I take thee to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward," he could only be prevailed on to say, "to have and to hold *till this day fortnight.*" That day fortnight he died. And a coincidence of another kind occurred at the destruction of the Royal Exchange by fire. At twelve o'clock on that night, the chimes struck up, for the last time,

> "There's nae luck about the house,
> There's nae luck at a'."

THEODORA. This naturally introduces the consideration of those cases where persons, in a nervous state, have fancied themselves to have received such intimations of death, and have actually fallen ill from the terror and anxiety which such imaginary revelations occasioned. And these are not unusual cases; nor are there wanting many instances in which, by the use of opium or some similar method, the fatal hour has been safely passed, while the patient, on awaking, has had no further recollection of the past, than as a horrible dream, gone by for ever.

PISTUS. There is a curious Cornish story of a warning of death, which very probably is only a coincidence, but which was at the time and in the place believed to be something more than this.

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A gentleman, in the north-western part of that county, had a portrait of himself taken, which he caused to be hung over his dining-room chimney-piece. One day, without any assignable cause, the picture fell down, and the portrait received a blow on one side of the forehead, which tore the canvass. A few hours after, the gentleman in question was riding out, when his horse fell, and threw him; he received a blow on the identical spot of his own forehead, and died almost immediately.

EUSEBIA. I have read another curious Cornish tale. When a man, whose whole course of life had been marked by the most flagitious atrocities, was lying on his death-bed, near S. Ives, a black ship, with black sails, was observed to stand in to the bay, into shallows where seamen felt well convinced no ship of that apparent burden could float. At the moment the soul passed from the body, the vessel stood out again; nor was it ever seen more.

SOPHRON. A curious mistake made in the Proclamation of Charles I. was afterwards received as an omen. The herald, instead of the "rightful and indubitable," called him the "rightful and *dubitable* heir" to the crown. In like manner there were, as we all know, believed to be some curious warnings attending Archbishop Laud's course. It was the day of the Decollation of S. John the Baptist, as he expressly notes in his diary, that he was chosen Head of S. John's

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College; and when the Head of S. John's perished by a similar end, the thing was remembered. And a short time before his imprisonment, he writes thus: "At night, I dreamed that my father, who died forty-six years since, came to me; and, to my thinking, he was as well and cheerful as ever I saw him. He asked me, What I did here? And after some speech, I asked him, How long he would stay with me? He answered, He would stay till he had me away with him. I am not moved with dreams; yet I thought fit to remember this."

PISTUS. I do not know whether one can say that Laud was not moved with dreams; at least he has left a good many of his own recorded.

SOPHRON. Yes; and hardly any, it would appear, attended with important results. We have not spoken of the credibility of dreams, nor is this the place to do so. But, while we are on the subject of fore-warnings of danger, I will relate two dreams, both of which were instrumental in preserving the person to whom they appeared from harm. The first happened at Edinburgh, where the story made some noise. A party had been formed for the purpose of going in a sailing-boat to Inch-Keith, and among those invited was a young man who was staying at the time at the house of his uncle and aunt in the city. The night before the intended expedition, the aunt awoke in terror, and told her husband that she had dreamed of the death of her nephew, who,

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she said, would be drowned on the morrow's expedition, if he persisted in going. Her husband merely laughed at her, recommended her to put her superstition out of her head, and to go to sleep. She did so; and the same dream presented itself again to her mind. Again she mentioned the thing to her husband; and he, though beginning to think the dream somewhat remarkable, advised her to compose herself. She went to sleep again; and the third time she had the same dream. Now thoroughly terrified, she requested her husband to go to his nephew, and ask him, as a great favour, from her, to stay at home on the next day. The uncle, with many apologies for his wife's timidity, did so; and the young man with some little reluctance consented to stay. Never morning broke more gloriously than the next; and much good humoured banter passed between aunt and nephew at the breakfast table, and during the course of the forenoon. But about four o'clock in the afternoon, one of the most violent squalls arose that was ever remembered in Edinburgh; the boat then returning from Inch-Keith went to the bottom, and every soul on board her was lost. No one ever denied the fact of the dream: of course, as to the cause of it,

Diversé men diversé thingés said,

as Chaucer speaks. The other tale to which I referred is hardly less curious. A married lady

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of my acquaintance dreamed that she was compelled one Sunday to stay at home, while the rest of her family went to church; that the house was one which she had never seen before; that she heard a knock at the door, and went to open it; that a man of most ill-favoured appearance entered, and began to insult her; on which she awoke in terror. Some time after, she removed temporarily to another house; and it so fell out that one Sunday she stayed at home herself, in order that the rest of her family might be able to go to church. While there alone, she heard a knock at the front door, and there being no one else in the house, went down to open it. When she had reached the hall, the remembrance of her dream flashed in an instant across her mind, yet she had not sufficient faith in it to hesitate about opening the door. She did so; and behold! there stood a man, the exact counterpart of him whom she had seen in her dream. She shut the door in his face, locked and bolted it, and awaited the return of her family in great agitation. The man (whoever he was) could not be found. Now that this was a providential warning of danger it is hardly possible to deny, except by denying the veracity of the narrator. For that a dream should have been accomplished up to a certain point, and that the rest should have proved false, does not seem very likely.

EUSEBIA. Except, indeed, that just now you gave us an instance of something very much like

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this, where the merchant dreamed of the death, first of his wife, then of himself; and the first proved true, and the second not so.

SOPHRON. True; but those were two separate predictions, the failure of one of which did not falsify or stultify the other. But in the present case the dream was so entirely one, that to conceive one part fulfilled, and the other part unfulfilled, would be to make the whole, practically speaking, a lie.

EUSEBIA. A similarly providential interference is commemorated by a sermon annually preached at Newark. An Alderman Clay, during the great Rebellion, twice dreamed that his house was burnt; he removed from it, and it shortly afterwards took fire when the town was bombarded by Cromwell. In commemoration of this deliverance, the alderman left a sum of money for the purpose I mentioned.

PISTUS. I have an instance, very similar to your first in its details, but unfortunately very different in its termination. The dream happened to a lady whose husband was a member of the yacht club. She was at the time staying with him at Lulworth, in Dorsetshire; and a regatta was to take place on the following day, in which his yacht was to sail. She dreamed that if he went on board the yacht, he would be drowned; and so earnest were her expostulations with her husband, that to humour her, he promised not to go on board. "But at least," he said on the

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following morning, "you will not object to my going in a boat to the yacht, to see that all on board is right." She was very unwilling to consent even to this; but on her receiving his promise not to leave the boat, she gave a reluctant permission. He went accordingly, and finding that some arrangement of the sails was different from that which he intended, gave orders that it should be altered. The men bungled and blundered; in his impatience he went on board, "just for one moment," and stood leaning over the side while the sailors did what he thought necessary. A sudden squall rose; the yacht lurched, and its unfortunate owner fell overboard and was drowned. This was the more talked of, because he had been compelled to assign a reason for not sailing in his own yacht, and had mentioned his wife's fears as the cause.

SOPHRON. And this seems an example where, if the dream had not been so fearfully put to the test, it would have been pronounced false; for if neither the yacht nor any of those on board it, except the owner, were hurt, of course, had he been absent, it would have been taken for granted that neither would he have received any injury.

THEODORA. Very probably; and perhaps some supernatural intimations which have accomplished their end, may have been set down as mere fancies on a similar score.

PISTUS. I know of a case where there can hardly, indeed, be said to have been a distinct

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warning of death, but which, nevertheless, taken in conjunction with what followed, seems to me extremely curious. A gentleman, whom I will call Mr. A., was confined to his bed with a rheumatic fever; his friend, Mr. B., was walking at no great distance from his house, fully aware that Mr. A. was ill, and unable to move, when, to his infinite surprise, he saw him walking at a short distance before him. Mr. B. quickened his pace; the appearance did the same, and at length turned off the road through a gate into a path. Mr. B. followed so near, as to be close to the gate while it was yet held open by his friend; who, without any ceremony, slammed it in his face, and passed on more rapidly than before. Mr. B. on this went to the house, learned that Mr. A. was still confined to his bed, and likely to do well. So the matter passed off for the time; but very shortly after Mr. A. was again taken ill, and died; and within a short period, Mr. B. followed him to the grave.

SOPHRON. We shall see, I think, by and by, that accounts of the appearance of a departed man to his friend in the moment of death, are not only the most numerous, but, generally speaking, the best authenticated of all relations of the appearance of spirits. Your last story borders more nearly on the power of second sight—of which we might now perhaps speak.

PISTUS. Before we do so, I will give you one more instance of a verified dream, which came

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almost within the sphere of my own knowledge. It took place in the August of 1845. A friend of mine, the rector of a fishing village on the Thames, had a servant, a native of the place, whose brother, a steady lad enough, was in the habit of constantly attending both school and church. This servant, one Saturday night, dreamed that she received intelligence that her brother was drowned; that she went to see the body; that she found it at a particular spot, and in a particular attitude. She told her fellow-servant, on waking on the Sunday morning, what she had seen, and added, that she must get her master's leave to go home on the Monday, and warn her brother against going out on the river. But her intended warning was too late. That very Sunday the boy was persuaded to go out on the water: the boat upset; and, on returning from church, his sister received the intelligence that he was drowned. She went to him immediately, and found the body on the spot where, and in the attitude in which, she had dreamed of it.

EUSEBIA. A sad instance of a neglected warning. And, of course, had not the servant told her dream in the morning, it would, when the event verified it, have been regarded as a mere delusion, or something worse.

PISTUS. Now, if you wish, we may speak of second sight. The most curious feature about it, and one which, I grant you, is an argument against its existence, is the very narrow locality

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over which it extends. At the same time, I do not believe that any traveller in the islands of Scotland, who had really taken pains to inquire into the matter, ever denied it. It corresponds, in a very great measure, with our preconceived notions of prophecy. The faculty is limited; the man that possesses it can only tell of the future when he has the vision upon him; at other times he is but like the rest of men. It is principally also confined to the arrival of strangers, and the predictions of death.

SOPHRON. There is something very awful in the manner in which the seer receives intimation of an approaching death: in the figure which he beholds of the doomed person, enveloped, to a greater or less degree, in the shroud; the signification of the different positions: if it only reaches to the ankles, the person will live some time, as much perhaps as one year. The next vision shows it to be advanced to the knees; the next, perhaps, to the chest; then it rises to the neck; and, at last, envelops the head, when death is certain to follow, whatever be the then state of health of the fated person, within a few days or hours.

PISTUS. Not that the vision necessarily goes through all those stages. Frequently it begins with the last; and the prophet is aware that some man has but a few hours to live, whom, perhaps, the rest of the world are congratulating on his health and prosperity.

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EUSEBIA. Such a fearful power quite illustrates Schiller's noble lines:—

"Frommt's den Schleier aufzuheben,
Wo das nahe Schreckniss droht!
Nur der Irrthum ist das Leben,
Und das Wissen ist der Tod.
Nimm, O nimm die traur'ge Klarheit,
Mir vom Aug' den blut'gen Schein!
Furchtbar ist es, deiner Wahrheit
Sterbliches Gefäss zu seyn."

PISTUS. And still more so, when it can predict (as it sometimes, though rarely, happens that it can) the death of the seer himself.

SOPHRON. Dr. Johnson, born as he was in a most unbelieving age, was too wise a man to disbelieve in the tales of second sight, coming as they did under his immediate notice in the Hebrides.

PISTUS. Any more than he did in the credibility, to say the least, of the tales of apparitions: a belief for which Churchill, with his minute mind, took care to ridicule him.

SOPHRON. Another curious warning is to be found in the account of the plague that depopulated Rome during the pontificate of S. Agatho. We are told, that, in the dead of night, a knock, sometimes single, sometimes repeated, was heard at the door of doomed houses, whether at the time infected or not infected; and that as many knocks as were heard in the night, so many deaths followed on the succeeding day.

EUSEBIA. I think we are bound always to receive

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the accounts of supernatural appearances in the time of great plagues with caution. The excitement, the prostration of spirit, the prevalence of horrors, the delirium of stricken men, all these things give rise to reports and fancies which no one cares to contradict, and which spread like wildfire through the populace. You remember De Foe's account of a fanatic, who, during the plague of 1665, stood in one of the London churchyards, and pointed out to a large crowd the motions of a ghost, which, as he affirmed, had stationed itself on one of the tombstones, and was pointing with its fingers first to the crowd around, and then to the churchyard, as if to signify what would be the end of the greater number of them in that visitation. De Foe looked too, and though the mob declared that they beheld the apparition, and could describe its motions, he could see nothing himself, and went away persuaded that there was nothing to be seen.

PISTUS. A curious superstition of a somewhat similar kind was that, as formerly held, about S. Mark's eve. It was believed that if a person placed himself near the church porch, when twilight was thickening, he would behold the apparitions of those persons in the parish who were to be seized with any severe disease that year, go into the church. If they remained there, it signified their death; if they came out again, it portended their recovery; and the longer or shorter the time that they remained in the building, the severer or less

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dangerous their illness. Infants, under age to walk, rolled in; a belief quite contrary to the usually received accounts of ghosts, which are universally (and the universality of the belief is somewhat curious) said to glide.

SOPHRON. Before we conclude, as we must do, for to-night, I will give you, in Lady Fanshawe's words, a remarkable story, which is, perhaps, as nearly connected with the present branch of our subject as with any other. She says, "And here I cannot omit relating the ensuing story, confirmed by Sir Thomas Baber, Sir Arnold Breamer, the Dean of Canterbury, with many more gentlemen and persons of that town. There lived, not far from Canterbury, a gentleman, called Colonel Colepepper, whose mother was wedded unto Lord Strangford: this gentleman had a sister, who lived with him, as the world said, in too much love. She married Mr. Porter. This brother and sister being both atheists, and living a life according to their profession, went in a frolic unto the vault of their ancestors, where, before they returned, they pulled some of their father's and of their mother's hairs. Within a few days after, Mrs. Porter fell sick and died. Her brother kept her body in a coffin set up in his buttery, saying, it would not be long before he died, and then they would both be buried together: but, from the night of her death, till the time that we were told the story (which was three months), they say that a head, as cold as death, with curled hair

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like his sister's, did ever lie by him when he slept, notwithstanding he removed to several places and countries to avoid it; and several persons told us they had felt this apparition." Lady Fanshawe's high character leaves no room for the least hesitation in receiving this story, one of the most singular that I know.

PISTUS. It is, indeed. We must leave the remainder of this matter for consideration, I suppose, to-morrow night; its interest demands that it should be discussed at some length.

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NIGHT V.

WARNINGS OF APPROACHING DEATH.

THEOPHILA. We were considering last night the various accounts of cases where supernatural warning has been given of approaching death or danger. Have we any thing further to say on that head?

SOPHRON. Yes: I have a singular instance, which you may rely on as strictly true, though I shall alter all the names, some of the parties concerned being still alive. Lord F. was on his travels on the Continent when he met a young man engaged in a similar way, with whom he grew very familiar. Mr. G. (for so I will call his friend) gave him, in the course of conversation, to know that the end of his life had been predicted to him, and that he had some grounds for believing that this prediction was not without its weight and credibility. "As how?" asked Lord F. "I was travelling with two friends," replied the other, "in Italy, and at Florence we agreed to have our nativities cast by a woman there, who had a great

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reputation for astrological skill. She foretold that none of us would live long, and named the days on which we should each die. My two friends are dead, and that at the time she named: it remains to see whether her prediction will be verified in me." "Pooh, pooh!" cried Lord F., "a mere coincidence: impossible that it should happen a third time. But what is the day she fixed?" Mr. G. named one about six months distant. "And where shall you be then?" pursued Lord F. "At Paris." "Why, I shall be there too. Let it be an engagement. Come you and dine with me on that very day at seven o'clock; and keep up your spirits till then. I shall be found at No. ——, Rue de ——. Do you agree to the bargain?" "Willingly," replied the other; and in a short time the friends separated. The six months passed; and a little before the appointed day Lord F. found himself in Paris. He sent a note to Mr. G., to remind him of his engagement, and received for answer that he would come. However, a day or two after another note was brought him, in which Mr. G. said that he was not very well, and must postpone the pleasure of dining with Lord F. till another time: that the indisposition was very trifling, and ere long he hoped to have the pleasure of waiting upon him. Lord F. thought no more of the matter, ordered dinner on the day that had been named at seven, for himself, and about six o'clock sent his servant to Mr. G.'s, with a merely

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formal inquiry how he was. Seven o'clock came. Lord F. sat down to dinner; when, just as he was beginning his meal, the door opened, and in walked Mr. G. He walked in, it is true, but he said not a word; went up to the table, and went out again. Lord F. was alarmed, and rang the bell, and it was answered by the servant whom he had sent with the message of inquiry. "How is Mr. G.?" he demanded. "Dead, my lord," was the reply: "he died just as I reached his house."

PISTUS. Truly a most wonderful story. Then we are to understand that, up to the last, Lord F. had no apprehension for his friend?

SOPHRON. None whatever. It seems hardly to have impressed his mind at all after he came to Paris.

PISTUS. You reserved the most extraordinary, as involving two supernatural interferences, to the last.

SOPHRON. There is one remarkable class of apparitions of which we have not yet spoken; those, namely, where the head of a family is warned of the decease of any member of it in a supernatural, but constantly recurring manner. This belief has prevailed in all parts of the world, and continues to our own day.

PISTUS. Our first instance may be that which Dr. Plot gives, and which the famous Platonist, Dr. Henry More, has transcribed, in his Supplement to Glanville's book. It occurred in the

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family of the Woods, then settled at Hampton, near Bridge Norton. Here a knocking was heard by the principal members of the family before the decease of any part of it. The first time this was observed was in the year 1661, when Mrs. Eleanor Wood, mother to Capt. Basil Wood, an officer in the royal army during the Great Rebellion, being by herself, heard a strange knocking in various parts of the house, for which she could by no means account. A fortnight after she received intelligence of the death of a son-in-law in London. Three years afterwards three loud knocks were distinctly heard by the same lady, her son, Capt. Wood, and his wife, so strongly given that the pans in the dairy tottered and shook, and were in danger of falling. Two of these knocks seemed to be in the house, and one on the door, whence Capt. Wood concluded that it was a warning of the death of two members of his own family, and of one relation. And so it fell out; for within six months his mother and wife died, and also a niece of the captain's. Ten years after, namely, on a Sunday in August, 1674, Mr. Basil Wood, a son of Capt. Wood, then residing at Exeter, heard, together with his wife and two other members of his family, two strokes struck, as with a cudgel, on the table in the room where they were sitting, one before, and one after morning prayer. He wrote this account to his father in Oxfordshire, who, in a fortnight after, lost his second wife, and in a quarter of a year his father-

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in-law. After that time we have no more accounts.

THEOPHILA. A like story was told of the family of the Torelle, at Parma. There was a hall in their palace, in which, before the death of any member, an old woman was seen sitting by the chimney-corner. A young lady of the family, herself dangerously ill, once saw this spectre, and, of course, gave herself up for lost. She recovered, however, but another member of the house died[1].

SOPHRON. In like manner a death in the family of the Lords of Chartley Park is foretold by the birth of a black or party-coloured calf in the sandy-coloured breed that inhabit the park.

PISTUS. There is said to be a castle in Finland, on the borders of a small lake, out of which, previously to the death of the governor, an apparition, in the form of a mermaid, arises, and makes sweet melody.

SOPHRON. That brings us to the Irish Banshee, the most poetical form of that belief. That in many families, previous to a death, a female figure makes its appearance, rending her hair, and giving every sign of grief, is firmly believed.

EUSEBIA. And sometimes the apparition takes other forms, as in that famous story of Lady Fanshawe. She and her husband were on a visit to a friend in Ireland, and at night they were ushered into a large and lonely room at one end of the castle. Towards midnight Lady Fanshawe awoke,

[1] Kornmann. iv. 57.

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her husband still remaining asleep. It was moonlight, and she lay looking at the beauty of the sky through the casement. On a sudden the casement was thrown open, and a female figure, with long dishevelled hair, thrust in its head, and shrieked out, "A horse! a horse!" and forthwith disappeared. Lady Fanshawe, in an agony of terror, woke her husband, and told him what she had seen, and they agreed to continue awake, and to watch whether any thing further would occur. Nor did they wait long. The window was again thrown open: the figure appeared again, and again shrieked, "A horse! a horse!" The story is differently related, as to the double apparition. They rose, knelt down, commended themselves to GOD, and were troubled no more that night. On the following morning, when they went down stairs, the mistress of the house inquired if they had rested well. On their replying that they had been much disturbed, she requested them, in an unusually impressive manner, to relate what they had seen or heard. They did so. "The same apparition," she answered, "is always seen in that room on the death of any member of this house. When you arrived last night, a poor relation, then in the castle, was suffering from illness, but no immediate danger was apprehended. Had I known that her death was near, I should not have put you to the inconvenience of occupying that apartment. But in the course of the night she was suddenly taken worse, and expired, and I

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then knew that you would see the apparition you describe."

THEOPHILA. Dr. Plot, I remember, mentions a family in Staffordshire, where a white bird, of very large size, was seen to flutter round the house before any death occurred in it.

PISTUS. There was or is an oak in Lanthadran Park, in Cornwall, which by a peculiar change in the leaves was said to foretell the death of the lord of the manor.

SOPHRON. Wales is peculiarly the country of such belief. Here we have the Corpse-bird, that flaps its wings over the doomed person; the Tanwe, or deluge of liquid fire over his lands; the Elyllon, a kind of Banshee, that howls and wails over him. Thus we have in Lancashire the Death-cart, that rattles through the streets at night, a tradition, perhaps, of the Plague-cart of fearful memory. Music, also, is said to have been sometimes heard in a similar manner. Dr. More gives the account of a whole family in Suffolk "that died one after another in a little time: and ever before any of the house fell sick, there was music heard to go from the house (though nothing seen), playing all along, which several people out of curiosity would follow, who observed it to pass through the field till it came to a wood, and there they left it or lost it. This was told for a certain truth to a friend of mine by Mr. Samson, not long since Fellow of King's College, in Cambridge."

EUSEBIA. I have heard a very curious natural

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explanation, in one case, of such music. The family by whom it was told were surprised, one day, by hearing a very wild but sweet melody played, apparently, outside their parlour window. It was heard again and again, at all hours, by individuals, and by the whole family. Some trick was suspected; the servants were watched; strict observations were made. All was to no purpose: still the same wild sweet strains continued. At length it was discovered to arise from the crawling of snails over the window-panes; on the same principle, I suppose, that a wetted finger will bring out such exquisite melody from a glass.

SOPHRON. If you wish to hear some of the most unearthly music that heart can fancy, go, on a stormy, gusty night, and sit down on the leeward side of the embankment of some railway where the electric telegraph is used. The various sounds that the gale expresses from that great Æolian harp are almost inconceivable. Now it is the deep note of an organ—now a shrill scream; now it is close above you—now a hundred yards away; now it seems to vibrate along the line of wires, as if aërial musicians were hurrying down them, and making melody as they went. Something of the same kind may be heard in a hop-garden, before the hops are up; and something, also, in a ship running under bare poles. But this by way of digression.

PISTUS. To return, then, to our subject. It is well known that, in a certain noble family now

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existing, a head appears in like manner, as a sign of the death of any of the members, to the head of the family. A late nobleman saw this apparition many times.

SOPHRON. Assuredly the most unaccountable cases are those where an animal, or rather, the appearance of one, answers the same end. Yet the following story comes to me so attested, that I really know not how to disbelieve it. A family in the east of England has a tradition, that the appearance of a black dog portends the death of one of its members. It was not, I believe, said that no death took place without such warning; but only that, when the apparition occurred, its meaning was certain. The eldest son of this family married. He knew not whether to believe or to disbelieve the legend. On the one hand, he thought it superstitious to receive it; and, on the other, he could not, in the face of so much testimony, altogether reject it. In this state of doubt —the thing being in itself unpleasant—he resolved to say nothing on the subject to his young wife. It could only, he thought, worry and harass her, and could not, by any possibility, do any good. He kept his resolution. In due course of time he had a family; but of the apparition he saw nothing. At length, one of his children was taken ill, I think with the small-pox; but the attack was slight, and not the least danger was apprehended. He was sitting down to dinner with his wife, when she said, "I will just step up

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stairs, and see how the child is going on, and will be back again in a moment." She went; and returning rather hastily, said, "The child is asleep; but pray go up stairs, for there is a large black dog lying on his bed: go and drive it out of the house." The father had no doubt of the result. He went up stairs; there was no black dog to be seen; but the child was dead.

PISTUS. The sign is odd, and, to our *à priori* judgment, unmeaning enough, to be sure; but I know a like occurrence in Sussex. In this case, a white rabbit appears, a few hours before death, to the sick man himself.

SOPHRON. Dr. More tells us of an Irish family forewarned in a similar manner, by "lights dancing upon a place they call Fairy Mount." Three did so on one occasion. "I spoke," he says, "with one that was a spectator thereof half an hour together, and observed the lights, though moved swiftly, how their flames were not cast horizontally, but went straight up to the zenith: who noted also, that two of the family, since that sign, were lately dead already, and suspected a third would follow; which accordingly fell out the same year, a little while after."

PISTUS. It was believed, in like manner, that S. Sylvester's tomb in the Lateran foretold the death of the reigning pontiff. So also it was held, that the family of Lusignan was warned of a death about to occur in it, by the appearance of Melesinda, the queen of Guy de Lusignan.

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SOPHRON. Lavater tells us of a friend of his, the minister of some Swiss parish, who, in the time of plague, had a warning at night of the seizure or death of any of his parishioners, by a noise in the room above him, as of the fall of a heavy sack on the boards.

PISTUS. In brief, these warnings are almost innumerable. It is said that Henry IV. of France felt, long before, in his breast, the phantom of the knife wherewith Ravaillac slew him. There are stories of sounds being heard, towards nightfall, in churchyards, as if a new grave were being dug—the stroke of the spade, the rending of the turf, the falling of the loose earth—which grave accordingly is dug there in reality in the course of a few days. So tales are told of all the pomp of a funeral having been seen to set out from the door of some house, the inhabitants being in perfect health; from which house a corpse has, no long time after, been carried to the grave. So again, a noise heard in one of the sedilia of a church was regarded as the sign of the death of that ecclesiastic who usually occupied it. There was a curious superstition in Germany, that, if a person saw his own wraith, it was either a sign of death immediately at hand, or of a very prolonged life.

THEOPHILA. Before we proceed any further in this inquiry, I should like to be told if any instances of apparitions are given by the writers of the early Church.

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SOPHRON. Undoubtedly. To say nothing of such examples as those of S. Agnes' appearance to her parents at her tomb, we are told that a spectre of prodigious size appeared at Antioch[1], the night before the outbreak of the sedition in the time of Theodosius; the same which gave rise to the homilies of S. Chrysostom on the Statues. Again, S. Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, was praying by night before the altar of his church, when a spectre of horrible appearance presented itself to him[2]. He rebuked it, and commanded it to depart. "I will depart," replied the apparition, "during thy lifetime; but after thy death, I will trouble the Church." On this, Gennadius prayed earnestly for its peace and safety, and shortly afterwards departed this life. So again, S. Felix of Nola appeared to the inhabitants of that city, when it was besieged by the barbarians. An odd story is related by John Moschus, of S. Eulogius of Alexandria. He was one night occupied by himself, in matins, when his archdeacon Julian entered, without, as was customary, giving any notice, and prostrated himself in prayer. When the bishop rose, Julian remained prostrate. At length Eulogius desired him to stand up. "I cannot, unless you help me," he answered; which the good bishop did accordingly. Shortly afterwards he disappeared, and the prelate thought that he had left the place. "When did the arch-

[1] Sozomen, H. E. vii. 20. [2] Theod. Lect. lib. i.

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deacon Julian go out?" he demanded of the door-keeper. The man denied that he had ever entered. The following morning, S. Eulogius happened to meet his archdeacon, and commented on his rudeness in not knocking before coming in. "By the prayers of my lord," said Julian, "I never came to this place last night." Then, says Moschus, Eulogius understood that it was the martyr S. Julian, prompting him to rebuild a ruinous church under his invocation. S. Basiliscus, an Asiatic bishop, who had received the crown of martyrdom at the same time with S. Lucian[1], when S. Chrysostom was driven into exile, appeared to him, and said, "Brother John, be of good courage; to-morrow we shall be together." The spirit had previously visited the priest of the church of S. Basiliscus, and had said, "Make ready a place for my brother John; for he is shortly coming hither." And the event proved the prediction. With stories like these the lives of the Fathers abound; perfectly analogous in kind, though somewhat differing in circumstances, from those of later ages. It would be endless to quote instances. So we read that S. Metas appeared to one Christina, predicting the troubles that were coming on the earth; that S. Amatus comforted his sorrowing mother by the assurance that he was with the LORD; that S. Cyprian confirmed S. Flavian in the view of ap-

[1] S. August. de Cura pro Mort. i.

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proaching martyrdom: and scarcely any mediæval biography but contains some such relations.

PISTUS. The ancient pagans believed the same thing. Plutarch, for example, says, that Damon, an inhabitant of Chæronea, had, by the commission of several murders, rendered himself so odious as to be forced to leave the city. The inhabitants, anxious to secure his punishment, enticed him back by smooth words and gentle speeches, and slew him in the bath. Thenceforward that house was, to use the modern term, haunted, and was finally shut up. The evil genius of Brutus is known to all the world. But it was said also that Cassius, a staunch Epicurean, and therefore a disbeliever in all such apparitions, beheld the ghost of Cæsar, singling him out, as it were, for attack, in the battle of Philippi[1]. A like story is told of Drusus[2]. After wasting Germany as far as the river Albis, he was returning, laden with trophies. A spectre, in the form of a woman, larger than the race of mortals, met him, and reproached him with his cupidity. "Depart," she concluded; "your labours and your course are approaching their end." Before he could reach the Rhine, Drusus was seized with a mortal disease. Pliny wrote a letter on the subject of spectres, in which he gives some instances of their appearance. Curtius Rufus, he says, when an obscure hanger-on of the proconsul

[1] Val. Max. i. 6. [2] Dion. Cass. lv. init.

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of Africa, was promised the proconsulate of Africa himself, by a female figure, like that which appeared to Drusus; and by the same he was warned of death. He also tells a curious story of a haunted house at Athens. It was spacious and commodious; but the prodigious and unaccountable noises, the clanking of chains, and the appearance of an old man, meagre and filthy, with long beard and uncombed hair, and wearing chains on his arms and legs, drove one tenant after another from the place. The proprietors were consequently compelled to offer the house at a rent ruinously disproportionate to its size. The philosopher Athenodorus came to Athens in search of a house. He was pleased with that in question; but on hearing the terms, felt persuaded that there must be some unmentioned drawback in the case; and, on inquiry, learnt the truth. He nevertheless engaged the house; and, on the first evening of his occupation, when it became dusk, dismissed his family, bade his slaves bring every necessity for writing, and employed himself in the composition of one of his works. When night drew on, he heard the rattling of chains, and the noise of steps, first outside, then inside the room; still he went on writing; till at last, on looking up, he saw the spectre as it had been described to him. It beckoned to him to follow; he motioned to it to wait, and continued his task. The apparition clanked its chains over the head of the philosopher. Athenodorus rose,

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took the light, and prepared to follow. The old man led the way slowly, as if loaded with chains, into the centre of the court, and then disappeared. Athenodorus marked the spot with plants and leaves, and retired to rest. On the following day he went to the magistrates, informed them of the circumstance, and requested that the place should be examined. Excavations were made; the mouldering remains of a man, whose legs and arms were chained, were discovered, and publicly buried; and the house was never again haunted. This is the most thorough ghost story that I know in the writings of the ancients.

SOPHRON. Yes: their relations usually concern figures of stupendous size, and rather of divine than human nature. This idea of size has left its trace in one modern language at least: the Portuguese *Avejão*, signifies either an apparition, or a man of monstrous size.

PISTUS. As to all these accounts, it is very little to our purpose, whether they be true or false; but very much to our purpose, that the belief in apparitions existed at such early times. I will mention but one more example. Pausanias tells us that, on the plain of Marathon, four hundred years after the great battle, the neighing of horses, the shouts of the victors, the cries of the vanquished, and all the noise of a well-contested conflict, were frequently to be heard. And every one will remember the appearance of Theseus in the battle

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of Marathon, and that of the twin brothers in the fight by the lake Regillus.

SOPHRON. You will find in most of those ancient tales, that the spirit which appeared was that of some man of note. This is not so usual in modern stories. I call one or two to mind. Louis, Duke of Imola, shortly after his death, appeared in his usual hunting dress to the private secretary of his son Louis, by whom he had been sent to Ferrara. "Tell my son," said the kingly apparition, "to meet me on this spot at this time to-morrow; for I have a matter of great moment to communicate to him." The prince either disbelieved the tale, or suspected some Italian treachery, and therefore refused to keep the appointment; but he sent one of his courtiers in his place. The duke appeared, faithful to his word, and expressed great grief that his son had not thought fit to obey his injunction. "To him," said he, "I could have communicated much more than I can do to you. But tell him this from me: twenty-two years and one month from this time he will lose Imola." The time was strictly observed: on that night, taking advantage of a hard frost for crossing the water, Philip of Milan, who had formed a league with Louis, treacherously surprised Imola, and added it to his own dominions. The other is this. A few weeks before the decease of the emperor Henry VII., at sunset there appeared in the palace court of the doge of Genoa, a horseman, armed *cap-à-pie*, and of far larger than mortal size: after riding

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up and down for more than an hour, and being seen by many witnesses, the spectre vanished. Three nights after, at nine o'clock, two horsemen, similarly armed, were seen on the same spot; and after a furious battle, they departed.

PISTUS. We have one or two of our most curious topics yet to enter on; such as the locality to which some apparitions appear to be confined, and the apparently useless nature of some of their visitations. But, since we cannot hope for time to enter on these subjects to-night, let me tell you two stories of the appearance of a spirit in fulfilment of a promise. They are both related by Glanville. There were two friends, Major George Sydenham, of Dulverton, in Somersetshire, and Capt. William Dyke, of the same county, who had, it would appear, served in the civil wars; and who, if not professed Atheists, were yet professed doubters of the existence of GOD, and the immortality of the soul. After many discussions on the subject, they agreed that whichever of them died first, should, if it were possible for him to do so, on the third day after his death, meet the other in Major Sydenham's summer-house at Dulverton, and inform him of the reality of a future state of rewards and punishments. Major Sydenham died; and Captain Dyke, on the third day after his death, went to Dulverton, accompanied by a relation of his, a Dr. Dyke, a physician of some note, who had been called in to take charge of a sick child at Major Sydenham's, but

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who knew nothing of the matter in hand. The relations slept in the same room; and the doctor was rather surprised, when the servant was retiring, to hear Captain Dyke request him to bring him two of the largest candles he could get. "What is the meaning of this?" he demanded, when the candles were brought. Capt. Dyke told him of the engagement; "and this," he continued, "is the very night, and I am resolved to fulfil my promise." Dr. Dyke represented that as there was no warrant for making these strange engagements, they were to be regarded as sinful in themselves; that therefore it was sinful to keep them; that none could say what advantage evil spirits might take of such an interview; and that the whole design was a manifest tempting of Providence. "This may be all very true," said Dyke, "but I promised to go, and go I will: if you will sit up with me till the appointed time, I shall be obliged to you; if not, it is no matter." The captain then laid his watch on the table, and waited in expectation of the hour. When it drew to half-past eleven, he took a candle in each hand, and went into the garden, where he walked up and down till two o'clock, but without hearing or seeing anything extraordinary. On this he concluded, either that the soul perished with the body, or that the unknown laws of the world of spirits had prevented Major Sydenham from keeping his promise. Some six weeks afterwards, Capt. Dyke had occasion to go to Eton, to place one of his sons

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at the college, and he was again accompanied by his relation the doctor. They lodged at the Christopher, and occupied different rooms. On the last morning of their stay, Captain Dyke was unusually late in rising. When he came into his cousin's room, he was like a man struck with madness; his eyes staring, his knees knocking one against the other, his whole face changed. "What is the matter?" said Dr. Dyke. "I have seen the major," replied the captain. "You don't believe me: if ever I saw him in my life, I saw him now." The doctor pressing for some account,—"Thus it was," said his friend: "this morning, after it was light, some one pulled back the curtains suddenly, and I saw the major, as I had known him in his life. 'I could not,' he said, 'come at the time appointed; but I am now come to tell you that there is a GOD, and a very just and terrible One, and if you do not turn over a new leaf,' they were his exact expressions, 'you will find it so.' The apparition then walked a turn or two up and down the room, and going to my table, took up a sword which Major Sydenham had formerly given me. 'Cap. cap.,' he said, using his common expression, 'this sword did not use to be kept in this manner when it was mine.' And with that he vanished." We are further told that such was Captain Dyke's truthfulness, as to preclude the possibility of doubting this relation; that it had a very visible effect on his character; and that, during the remainder of his life, which lasted about two years longer, he seemed to have

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the words of his friend continually sounding in his ears. Now I need not say how far more convincing this story is, than if the apparition had happened at the appointed time and place, when it would so certainly have been set down to an over-wrought fancy.

SOPHRON. And taking place, too, in day light, is another thing in its favour. But one thing that strikes me as remarkable in all these stories, is this,—you cannot form any idea whether the apparition is in happiness or misery. This is just the contrary of a made-up story: there the personal state of the spirit would be sure to be strongly brought out. Now, in the tale you have just told, no one could possibly decide as to the condition of Major Sydenham, however much, antecedently, we might judge against him. But to your second story.

PISTUS. It is much shorter. The famous Nicholas Ferrar had a brother, who lived in London, where he had considerable practice as a physician. He made a compact with a favourite daughter, that whichever of them died first, should, if happy, appear to the other. She was very unwilling to make the agreement; but at last consented. She married, and settled at Gillingham-lodge, near Salisbury. Here, being unexpectedly confined, she took poison by mistake for medicine, and died suddenly. That very night she drew back the curtains of her father's bed, and looked in on him; and he announced the death of his

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daughter to his family two days before he received the intelligence in the ordinary way.

SOPHRON. That shall be the close of our disquisitions for to-night; let us to-morrow consider local apparitions.

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NIGHT VI.

OF PLACES SUPPOSED TO BE HAUNTED.

SOPHRON. We laid it down, some time ago, as a probability, that there would be some places where we might naturally expect to find appearances of the departed more frequent than in others. In point of fact, we know that the universal voice of mankind has declared that the case is so. That deserted houses, marshy wastes, battle fields, the places where enormous crimes have been perpetrated, lonely roads, and such like spots, are haunted, truly or falsely, has always been, and still is believed. To-night we will examine into some examples of this kind.

PISTUS. You will find as a general rule, that places which once had some connexion with man, but are now deserted by him, are rather those which public belief represents as subject to the visitations of spirits, than such as have never been in any way connected with him. Holy Scripture itself, foretelling the destruction of Babylon, can-

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not give a more vivid picture of desolation than by the words, "their houses shall be full of doleful creatures."

SOPHRON. Haunted houses have, as we all know, been the most fruitful source of imposition. I do not mean those where, from time to time, the same kind of apparition presents itself, but those which, for weeks or months together, are kept in a state of disquiet and alarm by extraordinary noises and disturbances. I do not say that these things never have occurred; but I do say that if many of the freaks—I can call them by no other word—which have been recounted in such, be really the work of supernatural agency, then I can only come to Dr. More's sage conclusion, that "there are as great fools out of the flesh as there are in it." And when we consider the ease of imposition in these matters, by confederates artfully arranged, by ventriloquism skilfully managed, by sleight of hand opportunely practised; and when we know that many of these tricks have been detected, such cases seem to me to be in themselves suspicious in a very high degree. The so-called Stockwell and Cock-lane ghosts were detected, to the great confusion of their contrivers. The two most celebrated cases that have ever been known, were, I suppose, what was usually called the Demon of Tedworth, and the Epworth ghost. The first occurred just after the Restoration, and occasioned the most bitter con-

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troversy as to its reality. I conceive that we are not now in a condition to pronounce a verdict on the matter.

THEOPHILA. What were the particulars in general?

SOPHRON. It appears that from March, 1661, to April, 1663, the house of a Mr. Mompesson, at Tedworth, in Wiltshire, was disturbed in a most extraordinary manner. There was thumping and drumming round the rooms, scratching under the beds, furniture thrown about when persons were in the room, children thrown out of bed, articles of apparel strewn all over the floor, and many apish tricks of the same kind. The house was thronged with visitors, for the thing was known all over England. King Charles II. deputed some gentlemen to inquire into the matter. Glanville himself slept in the house, but nothing ever was discovered which could give the slightest idea of collusion. There were, I confess, several suspicious circumstances: a sword presented at the place where the noise seemed to be, always silenced it; there were no disturbances for three weeks after Mrs. Mompesson's confinement; there were none while the royal commission were in the house: but they took place while Glanville was there; and what he says on the subject is so sensible, that I will read it to you. "It will, I know, be said by some, that my friend and I were under some affright, and so fancied noises and sights that were not. This is the usual evasion. But

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if it be possible to know how a man is affected when in fear, and when unconcerned, I certainly know for my own part that during the whole time of my being in the room and in the house, I was under no more affrightment than I am while I write this relation. And if I know that I am now awake, and that I see the objects that are before me, I know that I heard and saw the particulars that I have told." Now, certainly, I confess, it is rather hard that an honest and clever man is not to be believed, when he speaks in this manner. We must also remember that Mr. Mompesson, if an impostor, was so for no assignable reason; that he suffered in his name, in his estate, in his family. Unbelievers called him an impostor, believers thought it a judgment for some extraordinary wickedness; he was unable to attend to his business through the concourse of visitors; his rest was broken, his peace of mind disturbed, and he never gained the slightest advantage in an imposition, if imposition it was, so painfully practised through so long a time. The Epworth ghost, absurd and useless as the whole thing seems, I cannot disbelieve. I will read you what Southey says on the subject in his Life of Wesley. "Such things may be supernatural and yet not miraculous; they may not be in the ordinary course of nature, and yet imply no alteration of its laws. And with regard to the good end which they may be supposed to answer, it would be end sufficient if sometimes

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one of those unhappy persons, who, looking through the dim glass of infidelity, see nothing beyond this life, and the narrow sphere of mortal existence, should, from the well-established truth of one such story, trifling and objectless as it otherwise might appear, be led to a conclusion that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy." And that must needs be a most well-authenticated relation which Priestley, if he would not believe, did not profess thoroughly to disbelieve.

EUSEBIA. How is it so well authenticated?

SOPHRON. Because the various members of the family, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley, and their daughters, wrote accounts of the apparition, Old Jefferies, as they called it, to Samuel Wesley, then in London; he preserved them, and they were printed by John Wesley in the Arminian Magazine. Southey reprinted them in the Appendix to the first volume of his Life of Wesley. To relate all the particulars would be impossible. In brief, they are these. On the first of December, 1716, a groaning, as of a person in great bodily pain, was heard by the servants outside the hall-door, but no one could be found there. Strange knockings were then heard in various parts of the house; the young ladies were first informed of it, then their mother, a woman of remarkably strong intellect; and, as Mr. Wesley never appeared to hear the sounds, they were thought to be a warning of his death. They at last grew so trouble-

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some, that he was informed of them, and in process of time heard them himself. The principal circumstances attending them appear to have been these. The house dog at first was furious, but afterwards shrunk into a corner whenever the sounds were heard. Before any visitation, the wind rose round the house; then a noise was heard which was compared by different auditors to the winding up of a clock, to the planing of deal boards, or to the setting a windmill when the wind changes. Then, the latches of the room into which the spirit seemed to enter were lifted, the windows clattered, and any vessel of brass and iron rang. After this, in various parts of the room a dead hollow knock was heard; and if any person knocked, the sound was imitated. Mr. Wesley's door-knock, rather a complicated one, seemed to puzzle the ghost; but at length it caught that. No one seems to have been terrified at the visitation; the sisters, in particular, would appear to have enjoyed the amusement. The younger children were sensible of its presence when asleep, for they trembled, and were covered with a cold sweat. Mr. Wesley told the spirit to "come to him, that was a man," and not to vex poor children; and for the first time, it then presented itself in the study. The usual time of appearance was a quarter before ten at night; but on Mrs. Wesley's having a horn blown, thinking that the noises might proceed from the rats, it revenged itself by coming in the day. There were no well

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authenticated stories of its having been seen; but it once held the door which a member of the family was going to open; and once tried to push Mr. Wesley down. A neighbouring clergyman, Mr. Hoole, of Hexey, was witness to the proceedings. In the spring its visits became rarer, its knockings were at first heard outside the house, then at a distance, and then ceased. Two other things I must relate; the one, that, at the beginning of its visits, it always knocked when Mr. Wesley (a staunch Hanoverian) mentioned King George at family prayer; the other, that Mrs. Wesley desired it not to disturb the house between five and six, the hour she set apart for her own private devotions; and it never did.

PISTUS. It is very curious that, in the gust of wind which arose before the coming of the supposed spirit, and in the loud knockings heard on pieces of wood which would not have seemed capable of supporting them, this case should so much resemble that at Tedworth, and another famous instance at Sir William York's house, at Lessingham, in Lincolnshire, which happened in 1679.

SOPHRON. No places have ever been more usually supposed to be haunted than mines. This belief prevails in Sweden, in Germany, in Switzerland; and the Kobale, the Trulle, or Gutels, are only different names given to the same class of spirits who are supposed to work there, and to be great imitators of man. Now we cannot wonder that, in those hours of fearful solitude and darkness,

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the fancy should invent almost any kind of delusion; especially where there are so many unearthly noises—the dripping of water down the shafts, the tunnelling of distant passages, the rumbling of trams from some freshly explored lode—all these things may give rise to imaginations far wilder than any which are recorded on the subject. But I think the story I am going to tell you stands on a different footing. You know that the Whitehaven mines run far out underneath the sea, and are some of the most terrible in England. A man, who had worked all his life in them, and had always borne a high character, was laid on his death-bed, and sent for the clergyman of his parish, to whom he had been previously known. I know not of what kind the disease was; it was one, I am assured, at all events, that did not affect his mind in the least, and that, during the whole of the account which I am going to give you, he was perfectly and most manifestly himself. He related it on the word of a dying man. He assured the priest that it was no uncommon thing, in the mines, for the voices of persons who had long been dead to be heard as in conversation or debate. I do not think he said that apparitions were seen; but he affirmed that they were heard to pass along the passages with a loud kind of rushing noise; that the miners, as far as possible, got out of the way on these occasions; that the horses employed in the mines would stand still and tremble, and fall into a cold sweat; and

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that this was universally known to be a thing that might occur any time. One remarkable instance he gave. The overseer of the mine he had been used to work was, for many years, a Cumberland man; but, being found guilty of some unfair proceedings, he was dismissed by the proprietors from his post, though employed in an inferior situation. The new overseer was a Northumberland man, who had the burr that distinguishes that county very strongly. To this person the degraded overseer bore the strongest hatred, and was heard to say that some day he would be his ruin. He lived, however, in apparent friendship with him; but, one day, they were both destroyed together by the fire-damp. It was believed in the mine that, preferring revenge to life, the ex-overseer had taken his successor, less acquainted than himself with the localities of the mine, into a place where he knew the fire-damp to exist, and that without a safety-lamp; and had thus contrived his destruction. But ever after that time, in the place where the two men perished, their voices might be heard high in dispute—the Northumbrian burr being distinctly audible, and so also the well-known pronunciation of the treacherous murderer.

THEOPHILA. It seems a most difficult thing to reconcile such stories with what we know of the state of departed souls. That they should continue to tenant the places with which they were connected while in the body, appears almost an

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incredible thing, whether we suppose them in happiness or in misery; or, if possible, then how wonderfully near does it bring the unseen world to ourselves!

THEODORA. Who can say it is not so near? Who, indeed, can define what they mean by the locality of a spiritual state? There can be no abstract proof that heaven is not, at this moment, in one sense, around us. And if, in the case you mentioned, the murderer and the murdered man were fellow-partakers of that eternal state, which, if the former did as you represent, he could not hope to escape, think of the full bitterness of hatred that must evermore have reigned between them, of which hatred the labourers in the mine might have been permitted to hear the gross and (so to speak) tangible expressions.

PISTUS. If from this we proceed to those more usual cases of haunted dwellings, where a spirit is said occasionally to appear, but where no perpetual disturbance prevails, we shall find no *à priori* argument, such as those you just mentioned, to lie against the credibility of such apparitions, except it be their uselessness, and, in some cases, the apparent ludicrousness of their form or manner of visitation.

SOPHRON. True; yet there is, so to speak, something extremely unreasonable in these kinds of apparitions. They do no good; they do no great harm; they are universally disbelieved by the "enlightened," and thought rather the

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subject of a good joke than of any thing more serious.

PISTUS. I will tell you a very odd thing, of which I know both place and person (though by name only) where it occurred. There was a house in the east of England, where one room was reported to be haunted; none of the family slept there, nor did they usually put visitors into it. But a young man, who happened accidentally to be staying there, so earnestly requested to be allowed to occupy it for one night, that at last consent was given. "You will be sure, however, to see the apparition," said the master of the house; "so do not blame me for the alarm it may occasion you." "Oh! not I," replied the other; "but, pray, in what form does it appear?" "Nay," said the gentleman, "I will not tell you that, and then you will not be able to fancy it." "Very well," said the visitor; "then I will tell you all about it to-morrow morning." The young man accordingly went to his room; bolted and locked the door; looked under the bed, under the drawers, into the closet; examined the fastenings of the windows; and convinced himself that no fraud could be used in the matter. I know not that he was a disbeliever in such things; but he was one of the most constitutionally fearless men that you can conceive. He went to bed, and to sleep. In the middle of the night he woke, and looking towards the bottom of his bed, saw a woman in a red cloak, fixing her eyes on him.

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"Who are you?" he cried, not a whit alarmed. No answer. "What are you?" No answer. "What do you want?" Still no answer. "Well," he said to himself, "this is a fancy: I will go to sleep again." And so he did. Waking some time after, he was astonished to see the same figure, in the same place and position. "If this be a real apparition," said he, "I will make sure that it is so, and that I am thoroughly awake." He got up, went to his wash-hand stand, poured out some water, and washed his face and hands, the appearance still standing as before. Having thus convinced himself that he was really wide awake, he got into bed, turned round, went to sleep, and woke no more till it was broad day. Then, on coming down stairs, he was interrogated as to what he had seen. "I have seen something," he said; "it is for you to say whether it is the same figure that generally appears." On hearing his account, the family assured him that it was.

SOPHRON. Something of the same kind happened to a friend of mine who was on a visit at a house in the village of South Malling, close to Lewes. This house was connected with sacrilege, and was reported to be haunted. He slept in a room that opened on to a long passage; and about four o'clock in the morning was disturbed by heavy steps coming along this passage. They stopped opposite his door: a hand was laid on the handle, and tried to turn it. "Some blunder," thought my friend: "you shall not come in, any how."

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He jumped out of bed and locked the door, and the steps seemed to go away. This occurred one or two nights, but my friend did not mention it in the family. Some few days afterwards he was removed into another apartment to make room for another visitor in that which he had previously occupied. On coming down to breakfast the next morning, "Some one was about early," said the new comer: "they tried to get in at my door, but I was just in time to hinder that." Every one protested that the servants were in another part of the house, and no other member of the family had passed that way. The thing was then observed; and the whole household were convinced that the steps along this passage, which constantly occurred, could not be natural.

PISTUS. It is a very odd popular belief which asserts lanes and roads and ruins to be sometimes haunted by a spirit which does not assume a human form. Of this the most curious instance is the celebrated Manx Dog:—

"They say, that an apparition, called, in their language, the Mauthe Doog, in the shape of a large black spaniel with curled shaggy hair, was used to haunt Peel Castle, and has been frequently seen in every room, but particularly in the guard-chamber, where, as soon as candles were lighted, it came and lay down before the fire, in presence of all the soldiers, who at length, by being so much accustomed to the sight of it, lost great part of the terror they were seized with at its first appearance.

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They still, however, retained a certain awe, as believing it was an evil spirit which only waited permission to do them hurt, and for that reason forbore swearing and all profane discourse while in its company. But though they endured the shock of such a guest when all together in a body, none cared to be left alone with it. It being the custom, therefore, for one of the soldiers to lock the gates of the castle at a certain hour, and carry the keys to the captain, to whose apartment, as I said before, the way led through a church, they agreed among themselves, that whoever was to succeed the ensuing night his fellow in this errand should accompany him that went first, and by this means, no man would be exposed singly to the danger; for I forgot to mention that the Mauthe Doog was always seen to come out from that passage at the close of day, and return to it again as soon as the morning dawned, which made them look on this place as its peculiar residence. One night a fellow being drunk, and by the strength of his liquor rendered more daring than ordinary, laughed at the simplicity of his companions, and though it was not his turn to go with the keys, would needs take that office upon him, to testify his courage. All the soldiers endeavoured to dissuade him, but the more they said, the more resolute he seemed, and swore that he desired nothing more than that Mauthe Doog would follow him, as it had done the others, for he would try if it were dog or devil. After having talked in a very reprobate manner

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for some time, he snatched up the keys, and went out of the guard-room; in some time after his departure a great noise was heard, but nobody had the boldness to see what occasioned it, till the adventurer returning, they demanded the knowledge of him; but as loud and noisy as he had been at leaving them, he was now become sober and silent enough, for he was never heard to speak more; and though all the time he lived, which was three days, he was entreated by all who came near him, either to speak, or, if he could not do that, to make some signs, by which they might understand what had happened to him, yet nothing intelligible could be got from him, only, that by the distortion of his limbs and features, it might be guessed that he died in agonies more than is common in a natural death. The Mauthe Doog was, however, never seen after in the castle, nor would any one attempt to go through that passage, for which reason it was closed up, and another way made. This accident happened about threescore years since, and I heard it attested by several, but especially by an old soldier, who assured me he had seen it oftener than he had then hairs on his head."

SOPHRON. If from these tales we turn to those where a spirit has appeared to reveal a secret which could not else have been known, we shall have the feelings of mankind far more strongly with us. The story of the Red Barn was credited all over England. I will tell you one of a similar

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kind related by Dr. More. In the year 1680, at Lumley, a hamlet near Chester-le-street, in the county of Durham, there lived one Walker, a man well to do in the world, and a widower. A young relation of his, whose name was Anne Walker, kept his house, to the great scandal of the neighbourhood, and that with but too good cause. A few weeks before this young woman expected to become a mother, Walker placed her with her aunt, one Dame Care, in Chester-le-street, and promised to take care both of her and her future child. One evening in the end of November, this man, in company with Mark Sharp, an acquaintance of his, came to Dame Care's door, and told her that they had made arrangements for removing her niece to a place where she could remain in safety, till her confinement was over. They would not say where it was; but as Walker bore, in most respects, an excellent character, she was allowed to go with him; and he professed to have sent her off with Sharp into Lancashire. Fourteen days after, one Graeme, a fuller, who lived about six miles from Lumley, had been engaged till past midnight in his mill; and on coming down stairs to go home, in the middle of the ground-floor he saw a woman, with dishevelled hair, covered with blood, and having five large wounds on her head. Graeme, on recovering a little from his first terror, demanded what the spectre wanted: "I," said the apparition, "am the spirit of Anne Walker;" and proceeded accordingly to

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tell Graeme the particulars which I have already related to you. "When I was sent away with Mark Sharp," it proceeded, "he slew me on such a moor," naming one that Graeme knew, "with a collier's pick, threw my body into a coal-pit, and hid the pick under the bank; and his shoes and stockings, which were covered with blood, he left in a stream." The apparition proceeded to tell Graeme, that he must give information of this to the nearest justice of the peace; and that, till this was done, he must look to be continually haunted. Graeme went home very sad: he dared not bring such a charge against a man of so unimpeachable a character as Walker, and yet he as little dared to incur the anger of the spirit that had appeared to him. So, as all weak minds will do, he went on procrastinating, only he took care to leave his mill early, and, while in it, never to be alone. Notwithstanding this caution on his part, one night, just as it began to be dark, the apparition met him again, in a more terrible shape, and with every circumstance of indignation. Yet he did not even then fulfil its injunction; till, on S. Thomas's eve, as he was walking in his garden, just after sunset, it threatened him so effectually, that, in the morning, he went to a magistrate, and revealed the whole thing. The place was examined; the body and the pickaxe found; a warrant was granted against Walker and Sharp. They were, however, admitted to bail; but in August, 1681, their trial came on before

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Judge Davenport, at Durham. Meanwhile, the whole circumstances were known over all the north of England; and the greatest interest was excited by the case. Against Sharp the fact was strong, that his shoes and stockings, covered with blood, had been found in the place where the murder had been committed; but against Walker, except the account received from the ghost, there seemed not a shadow of evidence. Nevertheless, the judge summed up strongly against the prisoners; the jury found them guilty; and the judge pronounced sentence on them that night, a thing which was unknown in Durham, either before or after. The prisoners were executed; and both died, professing their innocence to the last. Judge Davenport was much agitated during the trial; and it was believed that the spirit had also appeared to him, as if to supply in his mind the want of legal evidence.

PISTUS. I should have been very loth to bring in such a verdict on such testimony, even if I had been persuaded of the truth of the narrator. I should have thought, as Hamlet did,

> "——— The spirit that I have seen
> May be the devil: and the devil hath power
> To assume a pleasing shape, yea; and perhaps,
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
> (As he is very potent with such spirits,)
> Abuses me to damn me."

And I remember that Lavater tells a story, which would lead to the same conclusion. A friend of

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his, the magistrate of some German town, was riding through the fields in company with his servant one morning, when they saw a man of high respectability in the neighbourhood engaged in an act of felony. He rode to this gentleman's house as fast as he could, found him in bed, and learnt on satisfactory evidence, that he had not left his bed all night.

SOPHRON. However, I will give you an instance which happened in the house of a well-known Northumbrian baronet. His mansion stood by the side of a river, where it made a bend, so that a terrace ran between the front of the house and the water, while some of the side windows overlooked the stream. On this terrace, one morning, one of the children was playing, while the family were at breakfast, when he came running in to say that there was a little baby, all by itself, near the gravel-walk. The child was laughed at for fancying an impossibility, there being no baby in the house at the time; at last his importunity prevailed on some one to go down with him to the terrace. There was no infant to be seen; but still the boy persisted most solemnly that he had seen one, and pointed to the exact spot where he said that it had appeared. On examining this spot, the earth was observed to have been lately disturbed, and it was proposed to dig up the ground, and see what might be the cause. This was done, and the remains of an infant were discovered in the very place. This was no sooner known through

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the house, than one of the maid-servants threw herself out of an attic window, and was drowned in the river.

PISTUS. This appearance of a child to a child has something singular in it, though I shall be able to match it by and by. An instance of the apparition of a spirit for the righting of the poor is this. It is given by Dr. Fowler, sometime Bishop of Gloucester. Dr. Britton, who was rector of Pembridge, near Hereford, during the Great Rebellion, had a wife of distinguished piety. Shortly after her death she appeared to a young woman who had formerly been a maid of hers, but afterwards married to a respectable yeoman of the parish. Alice (for such was her name) was rocking her infant, when a knock was heard at the door; and on opening it, she saw a figure in all respects resembling that of Mrs. Britton. When she had a little recovered from her surprise,—"Were not my mistress dead, I should say that you were she." "I am the same that was your mistress," replied the apparition; "and I have a business of importance to employ you on." Alice trembled, and requested very earnestly that she would rather go to Dr. Britton, who must be more capable of fulfilling her wishes. The spirit replied that she had already been to him, but that he was asleep, and her power did not extend to awaking him. "In brief," it continued, "you must go forth with me." Alice pleaded the lonely condition in which her infant would be left, none

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else being in the house. The spectre answered, "The child shall sleep till you come back." There being no help for it, Alice, most sorely against her will, followed her mistress from the house into a large field which lay opposite. "Now," said the apparition, "observe how much of this field I walk round." And it walked round a large portion of the meadow. "All this," it continued, "belongs to the poor; it was taken from them by unjust means; and now, without his fault, is the property of my brother. Go you to him from me, and desire him, as he loved me—and as he loved his deceased mother—to surrender it up." Alice said that she could not hope to obtain credence for such a message. "Tell him, then," continued the spectre, "this secret, known only to him and myself:" and it entrusted her with it. After this the apparition spoke, as Mrs. Britton had been wont to speak, on the duties of her servant, and did not vanish till people were stirring. Alice went home, found her child sleeping, gave it to her neighbour's care, and went up to Dr. Britton's. He knew not what to think of the account, but sent her to his brother-in-law. That gentleman laughed heartily at first; but when told of the secret, said that he would give the poor their own, and accordingly did so, and they enjoyed that field when Dr. Fowler wrote.

EUSEBIA. That very much resembles the story of the Portugal piece, so admirably well told by Sir Walter Scott.

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SOPHRON. And that, again, brings to my mind a remarkable Cornish tale, which I will read you from Hitchins' "History of Cornwall." The scene of the event was a place called Botaden, or Botathen, in the parish of South Petherwin, near Launceston; and the account is given by the Rev. John Ruddle, master of the Grammar School of Launceston, and one of the prebendaries of Exeter, and vicar of Alternon.

"Young Mr. Bligh, a lad of bright parts, and of no common attainments, became on a sudden pensive, dejected, and melancholy. His friends, observing the change without being able to discover the cause, attributed his behaviour to laziness, an aversion to school, or to some other motive, which they suspected he was ashamed to avow. He was, however, induced to inform his brother, after some time, that in a field through which he passed to and from school,"—Launceston school, of which I said that Mr. Ruddle was head master,—"he was invariably met by the apparition of a woman, whom he personally knew while living, and who had been dead about eight years." Young Bligh is said to have been, at this time, about sixteen. "Ridicule, threats, and persuasions were alike used in vain by the family to induce him to dismiss these absurd ideas. Mr. Ruddle was, however, sent for, to whom the lad ingenuously communicated the time, manner, and frequency of this appearance. It was in a field called Higher Broomfield. The apparition, he said,

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appeared dressed in female attire, met him two or three times while he passed through the field, glided hastily by him, but never spoke. He had thus been occasionally met about two months before he took any particular notice of it: at length the appearance became more frequent, meeting him both morning and evening, but always in the same field, yet invariably moving out of the path when it came close to him. He often spoke, but could never get any reply. To avoid this unwelcome visitor he forsook the field, and went to school and returned from it through a lane, in which place, between the quarry-park and nursery, it always met him. Unable to disbelieve the evidence of his own senses, or to obtain credit with any of his family, he prevailed upon Mr. Ruddle to accompany him to the place.

"'I arose,' says this clergyman, 'next morning, and went with him. The field to which he led me I guessed to be about twenty acres, in an open country, and about three furlongs from any house. We went into the field, and had not gone a third part before the spectrum, in the shape of a woman, which he had described before (so far as the suddenness of its appearance and transition would permit me to discover), passed by. I was a little surprised at it; and though I had taken a firm resolution to speak to it, I had not the power; yet I took care not to show any fear to my pupil and guide; and, therefore, telling him that I was satisfied of the truth of his statement,

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we walked to the end of the field, and returned: nor did the ghost meet us that time but once.

"'On the 27th July, 1665, I went to the haunted field by myself, and walked the breadth of it without any encounter. I then returned, and took the other walk, and then the spectre appeared to me, much about the same place in which I saw it when the young gentleman was with me. It appeared to move swifter than before, and seemed to be about ten feet from me on my right hand, insomuch that I had not time to speak to it, as I had determined with myself aforehand. On the evening of this day, the parents, the son, and myself, being in the chamber where I lay, I proposed to them our going to the place next morning. We accordingly met at the stile we had appointed: thence we all four walked into the field together. We had not gone more than half the field before the ghost made its appearance. It then came over the stile just before us, and moved with such rapidity, that by the time we had gone six or seven steps it passed by. I immediately turned my head, and ran after it, with the young man by my side. We saw it pass over the stile by which we entered, and no further. I stepped upon the hedge'"—you must remember that in Cornwall a hedge means a stone wall—"'at one place, and the young man at another, but we could discern nothing; whereas I do aver that the swiftest horse in England could not have conveyed himself out of sight in

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so short a time. Two things I observed in this day's appearance. First, a spaniel dog, which had followed the company unregarded, barked, and ran away as the spectrum passed by; whence it is easy to conclude that it was not our fear or fancy which made the apparition. Secondly, the motion of the spectre was not *gradatim*, or by steps or moving of the feet, but by a kind of gliding, as children upon ice, or as a boat down a river, which punctually answers the description the ancients give of the motion of these lemures. This ocular evidence clearly convinced, but withal strangely affrighted the old gentleman and his wife. They well knew this woman, Dorothy Durant, in her lifetime, were at her burial, and now plainly saw her features in this apparition.

"'The next morning, being Thursday, I went very early by myself, and walked for about an hour's space in meditation and prayer in the field next adjoining. Soon after five I stepped over the stile into the haunted field, and had not gone above thirty or forty yards when the ghost appeared at the further stile. I spoke to it in some short sentences, in a loud voice, whereupon it approached me but slowly, and when I came near, moved not. I spoke again, and it answered me in a voice neither audible nor very intelligible. I was not in the least terrified, and therefore persisted until it spoke again, and gave me satisfaction: but the work could not be finished at this time. Whereupon, the same evening, an hour

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after sunset, it met me again at the same place, and after a few words on each side it quietly vanished, and neither doth appear now, nor hath appeared since, nor ever will more to any man's disturbance. The discourse in the morning lasted about a quarter of an hour.

"'These things are true, and I know them to be so, with as much certainty as my eyes and senses can give me; and until I be persuaded that my senses all deceive me about their proper objects, and by that persuasion deprive myself of the strongest inducement to believe the Christian religion, I must and will assert that the things contained in this paper are true. As for the manner of my proceeding, I have no cause to be ashamed of it. I can justify it to men of good principles, discretion, and recondite learning, though in this case I choose to content myself with the assurance of the thing, rather than be at the unprofitable trouble to persuade others to believe it; for I know well with what difficulty relations of so uncommon a nature and practice obtain belief.

"'Through the ignorance of men in this peculiar and mysterious part of philosophy and religion, namely, the communication between spirits and men, not one scholar in ten thousand, though otherwise of excellent learning, knows any thing about it. This ignorance breeds fear and abhorrence of that which otherwise might be of incomparable benefit to mankind.' On this strange re-

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lation," concludes the county historian, "the editor forbears to make any comment."

PISTUS. I think that is one of the most remarkable stories which you have related; and the very thing which spoils its interest makes one the more undoubtedly receive its truth.

EUSEBIA. You refer to Mr. Ruddle's silence as to the mission of the spirit.

PISTUS. Yes: it has the very impress of truth. The whole tale is most naturally related. You see the priest of the seventeenth century, rather disposed to believe in apparitions, but, with sturdy good sense, requiring some more proof of the fact than a boy's word. His minute description of the manner in which the ghost appeared is very interesting; and the fact of its visibility to the dog that was with them, very curious, and not to be overlooked in a discussion of this kind.

SOPHRON. To my mind the most remarkable part is his assurance that the spirit would appear no more. And one longs to know what business it was that could not be despatched in the morning, and yet was so easily accomplished in the evening. One can think of nothing but some inquiry on the part of the spirit which Mr. Ruddle could not answer without further time. And yet how contrary to all our ideas of an apparition, that it should come to a man for information!

THEODORA. You might say, perhaps, that in the morning conversation the spirit requested Mr. Ruddle to execute some commission; of the ac-

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complishment of which it received assurance in the evening.

SOPHRON. That comes to much the same difficulty; for how strange that it could not have satisfied itself!

PISTUS. And then its confinement to that field is singular. Mr. Ruddle seems to have felt satisfied that it could not cross the stile when he retired into the adjoining field to prepare himself for his interview with it.

EUSEBIA. It affords another instance of an apparition presenting itself to the most unlikely person at first. The spirit wanted nothing with young Bligh, and only appears to have used him as an instrument for getting at Mr. Ruddle. And yet how remarkable its unwillingness to appear when he first went into the field by himself!

PISTUS. And not less so the length of time which elapsed between Dorothy Durant's death and her appearance. Well, it is one of the most striking stories I ever heard.

THEO. The evening has seemed to close quite speedily. We must reserve any thing else we may have to say on the subject till to-morrow.

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NIGHT VII

OF THE CREDIBILITY OF APPARITIONS.

THEO. Just look out into the solemn loveliness of this evening. One cannot wonder that men's minds should be disposed to receive any intelligence from the world of spirits, at a time when their own world looks so spiritual itself.

SOPHRON. It is odd that with so much less light the contrast between moonlight and moon-shade should be so much more striking than the similar contrast by day. Such a violent opposition of tints would in broad daylight be monstrous.

PISTUS. I never saw a more striking contrast than once in crossing the mountains by moonlight. We were winding up a pass, one side of the ravine being in the deepest shade. Foremost of our party rode a lady, in a white habit, mounted on a white horse. When she reached the top of the zigzag which we were ascending, she came out into the full moonshine, and the effect of that single horse and rider glaring with a snow-white

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brightness against the black sky, and amidst the wild mountain scenery, was indescribable.

SOPHRON. The shadows of the contorted arms of trees in winter are most curious, and, I doubt not, have given rise to many and many a tale of haunted lanes; the very spots where such apparitions seem most useless.

EUSEBIA. Have we sufficiently considered that argument of uselessness? for, it does seem to me that unbelievers have a right to rely on it, and to argue that, if GOD ever does break through the established laws of nature, it might reasonably be expected that it would be to some good end.

PISTUS. You have first to prove that a seemingly useless apparition may not be sent for a very good end, although we may not be able to know it. I might urge that any thing which tends to convince us of the nearness of our connexion with the invisible world has a manifestly good end, only you would reply that such stories are seldom believed, and therefore cannot produce such conviction. Yet they may do so in the persons immediately concerned; and that is something. On the whole, I would rather say that we know far too little to decide whether any given supernatural appearance is useless or not; and there are cases where some that have seemed useless and indeed absurd, have afterwards been proved very much the contrary. I will read you one of these from a lately published book. "A

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gentleman was returning to his house at Evesham, (I think,) one summer evening in the late twilight. When a short distance from the town, he saw, on the opposite side of the road, a friend, whom he well knew to have been for some years dead. Excessively terrified, he quickened his pace; the figure did the same: he walked slowly; the apparition followed his example. So the pair kept on, till they were almost in the town, when the gentleman in question saw two ill-looking fellows crouching down at the side of a hedge, and heard one of them say to the other, 'It wont do, Tom; there are two of them.' Shortly after passing these men, the apparition vanished. Sometime subsequently, it was discovered that the two men had formed a design of robbing, on that particular evening, the gentleman in question, and were only restrained from doing it by the belief that he was accompanied by a friend."

THEODORA. Mr. Dendy thus beautifully tells another story of the same kind. "I remember, as I was roaming over the wild region of Snowdonia, . . . the Welsh guide was looking down in deep thought on Llyn Guinant; and, with a tear in his eye, he told us a pathetic story of two young pedestrians, who were benighted among the mountains in their ascent from Beddgellert. They had parted company in the gloom of the evening, and each was alone in a desert. On a sudden, the voice of one of them was distinctly heard by the other, in the direction of the gorge

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which bounds the pass of Llanberris, as if encouraging him to proceed. The wanderer followed its sound, and at length escaped from this labyrinth of rocks, and arrived safely at Capel Curig. In the morning, his friend's body was found lying far behind the spot where the phantom voice was first heard, and away from the course of their route. Was this . . . a solemn instance of friendship after death, as if the phantom had been endued with supernatural power, and became the guardian angel of his friend?"

SOPHRON. I can give you two stories, which, taken together, will produce a similar conclusion. There was a house in Cambridge, in S. Andrew's Street, where for many days and nights together the bells rang almost incessantly, no cause being assignable, and continued to do so even when the ropes were cut. Of course, in an University this was set down to some folly among the young men; but, though every possible endeavour was made to find out the cause, it never could be discovered. The disturbance finally ceased—if I have been rightly informed—on the last day of the year. Now, the facts of this story no one can deny; but that the instrumentality was supernatural, I for a long time fairly disbelieved; partly on account of the superior ease with which such a freak might be performed in Cambridge, as compared with any other town; partly on account of the uselessness of the visitation. At present I could not speak so decidedly; for,

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though my first argument remains as strong as ever, my second has been cut away from me by the following story:—In a lone part of the country, but not so very far from London, were two gentlemen's houses at a short distance from each other; besides these two, there were none very close. The gentleman and lady who owned the better of the two, were professedly, if not Atheists, any how Deists. They had invited several friends to dinner one evening, and the lady was sitting in her drawing-room that afternoon, when she was annoyed by the constant ringing of a bell in the kitchen. She rang, and inquired what was the matter. The servant replied that they did not know who was ringing; but first one bell, and then another, and then two or three together were pulled. The mistress, of course, grew angry at what she thought an impertinent answer; but, as the noise continued, she was obliged to examine into the matter for herself, and she found the servant's answer perfectly correct. The bells were ringing, and no one could tell why or how. A trick was suspected, and the bell-wires were cut: still the bells went on. The lady became alarmed, and her husband thought the circumstance curious; and as the guests were now beginning to arrive, it was mentioned to them. And, indeed, it was almost necessarily talked of, for the disturbance continued all dinner-time, and all the evening; and when her friends were going away, the lady had worked herself into such a

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state of agitation, as to request one or two of them to stay. They consented; still the bells rang on, nor did they cease till about midnight; after which they were quiet. Nothing remarkable happened in that house, but in the neighbouring one there was a robbery, and murder was committed. Now was not this interference, if supernatural, useless?

THEO. Why, if that be all the story, it would certainly seem so; at all events it was useless where it occurred.

SOPHRON. Well, that *was* all the story for some time. At length, the robbers who had broken into the other house were taken up, tried, and condemned. They then confessed that it had been their intention to have broken into that of which I have been telling you, where the plate was much more valuable; but that there was such an unaccountable ringing of bells, and (as they heard) so many visitors, that they preferred making an attempt on the other. Whatever others may think, the lady and gentleman in question were so thoroughly convinced that they had been the subjects of a miraculous interference of Providence, as to renounce Deism, and thenceforward to live like good Christians.

EUSEBIA. Well, that is the happiest termination we have yet heard. But you do not mean to say that there are many tales of apparition, of which you could not, by any possibility, discover or imagine the use?

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SOPHRON. Certainly not: nay, I rather draw an argument the other way from the fact. If the visitations of all spirits were attended with an apparent use, it would be natural to conclude, in many of them, that the use suggested the device of the ghost. Again, on the other hand, if no such apparitions had any use, I confess it might be brought forward as an argument against the theory, from seeming to show the want of any connexion of an overruling Providence with such appearances.

EUSEBIA. But is it not considered one fair test of a miracle, whether it is of any utility or not?

SOPHRON. It has been so considered: but by whom? By men who, like Douglas, rested their defence of Scripture miracles well nigh on the destruction of all others. Not that even then they could secure their point. Look at the miracle of Elisha, when he caused the iron to swim. Was not that (to use the almost profane language of such writers) an useless miracle? Granting that the man who lost the axe-head were poor, as the fact of his having borrowed it has been supposed—I know not with what justice—to prove, is it to be imagined that none of the sons of the prophets possessed money enough to purchase another axe, or charity sufficient to help a brother in distress? Again, when our LORD was required to pay His share of the temple tribute, we know that the Apostles had a common bag, and cannot but believe that

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so small a sum might have been paid from that. But it pleased Him rather to work a miracle, and cause a fish to bring the piece in his mouth.

PISTUS. I fear we must end this discussion for to-night, for I hear a somewhat untimely visitor.

SOPHRON. Not so: it is my friend Scepticus, a most determined disbeliever in such relations as those we have been dwelling on. I told him the subject of our discussion, and invited him to join us in it.

EUSEBIA. We shall then hear somewhat on the other side of the question, I presume.

SOPHRON. Welcome, good Scepticus! We are still, you see, on the same subject. Sit down, now, and give us the advantage of your remarks.

SCEPTICUS. Well, I have no objection. Pray, on what branch are you dwelling to-night?

PISTUS. On the question whether any argument can be drawn against the credibility of such tales from the uselessness and apparent impossibility of some. We are on the point of agreeing that an apparition, the use of which is not to be discovered, is not in itself one whit more improbable than such as have an extreme and manifest utility.

SCEPT. If such exist. If you are determined to believe every thing for which you have a certain amount of testimony, I can give it you for some tales which I am sure you, or any other man possessed of common sense, would reject as absurd.

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PISTUS. To what tales do you refer?

SCEPT. Why, for example, that one of the butler, in Ireland, who had been like to be carried away by fiends. He was sent, so Glanville says, by his master to buy cards; he fell in with a company sitting at a banquet in a field through which he passed; they invited him to sit down with them; one among them warned him, "Do nothing which these people ask you;" he refused any refreshments; and the whole scene vanished. That night, continues the narrator, the friendly individual among the company came to the bedside of the butler, and warned him not to stir out of doors, for that if he did, he would inevitably be carried away. He kept within till evening, but then, having stepped into the garden, while several persons were standing by him, a rope was thrown round his waist, he was pulled off with incredible speed, and only stopped by accidentally meeting with a man on horseback, who laid hold of one end of the rope, and had a smart blow given him for his pains. Here you begin to get the testimony of three or four persons, besides that of the original actor. But this is not all. The Earl of Orrery hearing of this, sent for the man to his house; he slept there, and told that nobleman on the following morning that the spectre had again been with him, and had assured him that on that day he would infallibly be carried away, and that no efforts could save him. On this, two bishops were sent for; and several

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strong men commissioned to keep with the butler all day. Nothing happened till towards evening, and then the unfortunate butler was observed to rise up in the air, as if about to be bodily carried away. On this, one or two of the stoutest fellows in the company endeavoured to press him down with their own weight, but to no purpose; he was whirled about at the top of the room, in which attitude you may see him represented in the frontispiece to Glanville's book. After some time, he was let down, and so escaped. Heard ever man so monstrous a tale? And yet your worthy ghost believers of the seventeenth century believed this as firmly as any other; and besides a good number of inferior witnesses, the Earl of Orrery is quoted as having seen this person carried up by invisible hands into the air.

SOPHRON. You have forgotten one material passage in this story; namely, that the party chiefly concerned in it was subject to fits. This effectually quashes all his evidence; nor do I find any great degree of proof for the rest of the tale. If the Earl of Orrery, or any other person of unblemished reputation, had assured me that he had seen a man supernaturally lifted off his feet and carried to the roof, I could not venture to disbelieve him, unless I knew him to be a man of weak intellect. So, if Glanville had told me, or left it in writing (which comes pretty much to the same thing), that he had been assured by Lord Orrery of his having seen it, I could hardly

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have failed to credit him, making all due allowances for the intermediate link. But you will notice that, confessedly, the tale comes at third or fourth hand; which is one serious objection, because, by a comparatively trifling exaggeration, a most miraculous story may be resolved into an every-day occurrence. So there is one objection. But a stronger one, to my mind, is, that this account seems really opposed to all idea of a superintending Providence. If evil spirits carry off, at their will, those that have offended them, and are to be resisted in the same way of physical force as a human enemy, GOD'S superintending government seems quite put out of the question. There does not appear, according to the tale, to have been any other idea of opposing the ghostly enemies of this man, than by mustering a large body of friends: prayer and other spiritual weapons are left out of the question. The whole thing corporealizes our notions of spirit, and weakens our belief in Providence.

SCEPT. Now you are doing the very thing that believers in such tales will not allow to be done —finding an *à priori* reason for disbelieving testimony.

SOPHRON. I did not say that any *à priori* reason would not justify you in rejecting such stories as those on which we have been dwelling. Any thing, for example, which directly impugns any article of faith is at once to be rejected; and the more nearly it approaches to this, or seems to

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approach to it, with the more caution is it to be received. This tale appears, to say the least, to be in opposition to what we know concerning God's Providence. Still, it may be very possible that it only appears to do so; therefore, if it have a sufficient degree of testimony, I am not unwilling to receive it. But I do not find such degree in the account as given; I do find some suspicious circumstances connected with it; and therefore, while I am not justified in saying that it could not have been, I am justified in concluding that I do not believe that it was.

Scept. Do you mean, then, to say, that the same weight of evidence which would induce you to believe the commonest and most every-day occurrence, would warrant your crediting any tale of an apparition?

Sophron. Undoubtedly not. The more at variance with the usual course of God's Providence be the tale, surely the more testimony it needs to render it credible. It is but the carrying out an every-day principle. I have a servant, on whose word I know little dependence is to be placed. He calls me in the morning, and I inquire what kind of day it is. He answers, "Fine," and I implicitly believe him. The weakest kind of testimony is sufficient for so very trivial and likely a fact. But if the same servant were to assure me that he had that morning seen a mock sun, I should have very great doubts of his veracity, though the thing asserted were in itself unim-

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portant. And if he were to assure me that he had been visited by a spirit on the preceding night, which spirit had given him a message for me, I should not dream of acting on that message, unless I could find some concurrent testimony to its credibility. But if two honest, unimaginative men came to me, and professed to be entrusted by a ghost with a message on which I was to act, I do not see on what principle I could disbelieve them, unless the nature of the message were such that I had some reasonable grounds to suspect collusion; as, if I were desired to do something for the benefit of my informants. But further, if these men gave me a token, such as they could not of their own unassisted knowledge have become acquainted with, in proof of their words, should I not be guilty of folly in disbelieving them? And further, if, as in the case of the death of the Duke of Buckingham, the event verified the prediction, should I not be mad to deny that that prediction came from a supernatural source? Are you prepared to say that apparitions are impossible? Because, if you can prove that, of course all argument from testimony is at an end.

SCEPT. All things are, of course, possible to Omnipotence; but I hold the thing to partake very much of the nature of an impossibility.

SOPHRON. Almost impossible and quite impossible are as far apart as light and darkness; but, not to urge that, whereon do you ground your

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abstract idea of the very excessive improbability of such appearances?

SCEPT. I think the writers on the other side have shown their appreciation of it. Dr. Henry More, in his Enchiridion, where he is writing on the true nature and essence of spirit, with a view to prove the possibility of apparitions, is compelled to argue that spirits are material. His whole philosophy on this matter was staked on that point; and, in his annotations on various relations of apparitions, he takes care to dwell on "the easy percribration of spirits through porous bodies," and the like topics.

SOPHRON. I might answer you in your own way, that your friends, his opponents, were guilty of glaring absurdities in their opposing arguments. What say you to the Nullibists, who, even affirming that there were such things as spirits, nevertheless, following Des Cartes, asserted that they could not, being immaterial, be said to exist any where?—that spirits, in short, exist *no where?* What say you to the *Holenmerians*, who affirm that spirits are not only, as a whole, in the whole place occupied by them, as all matter is, but, as a whole, in every part and point of the whole? nay, and who make it their very definition of spirit, that the whole must be in the whole, and the whole in each part of the whole also? No; all that these discussions prove is, our ignorance of the subject: they will never convince any one

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either for or against the possibility of apparitions.

SCEPT. It seems to me that—though that is not the strongest argument—it is very doubtful whether physical senses, like ours, could see a spirit.

PISTUS. What say you, then, to all the instances in Holy Scripture to the contrary? more especially to that where the young man, at the prayer of Elisha, had his eyes opened to behold the chariots of fire and horses of fire that surrounded the city?

SCEPT. I say that, in those instances, the eyes of individuals were miraculously opened to behold those supernatural appearances. That is a very different thing from such tales as are now in vogue. In them a spirit is usually represented as appearing when it pleases, where it pleases, and to whom it pleases; as if the mere fact of presenting itself to a man made it also visible to him.

PISTUS. On the contrary, were such the case, I should agree with you on the point. In all those instances in which ghosts have appeared, GOD must be considered as having supernaturally enabled the objects of their visitation to behold them. The miracle is rather in the person seeing than in the thing seen.

SCEPT. But then again, those appearances in Scripture are confined to the visits of angels. These, we know, are ministering spirits, and

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might be supposed to appear on messages whether of love or rebuke; but of the spirits of departed men we are not told as much, nor have we any instance of a similar thing.

SOPHRON. That, with your favour, is a great deal more than can be asserted. How can you tell that the spirits of the departed just may not be sometimes meant under the title of angels in the Old Testament? But whether there may be or not, we have the one instance of Samuel raised by the witch of Endor, which is a host in itself.

SCEPT. No one can reasonably assert that that apparition was in reality the soul of Samuel: it was simply the illusion of an evil spirit.

SOPHRON. On the contrary, the whole tenor of the story most manifestly shows that it was Samuel. The enchantress plainly was astonished at what she saw. She expected, probably, to behold some spirit in the shape of Samuel; but when "the old man covered with a mantle came up," she perceived that it was something more than she had looked for. She stood in need of Saul's comfort: a marvellous thing, if she were only pursuing her usual craft! This completely destroys the objection, that enchantments can have no power over the souls of the just. Of course they cannot; nor need any one say that they had here.

SCEPT. You will allow thus much—that Samuel, if it were really he, could not appear without the command of GOD.

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SOPHRON. Or His permission.

SCEPT. Well; His command or His permission. And would that command or that permission have been given in answer to a wicked endeavour on the part of Saul? See what this would come to: Saul sought, in the usual and appointed ways, for the direction of GOD; no answer was returned; he then employed a method expressly and absolutely forbidden, and in itself a capital crime, and at once obtained a reply.

SOPHRON. And in that reply his own punishment. But what more astonishing in the fact that an answer was returned when impiously sought, which had been denied when endeavoured after in the appointed manner, than there is in the fact that, when Ahaziah sent to consult Baalzebub, GOD returned him an answer by the mouth of His prophet? And the case was the same with Balaam. When he was endeavouring to discover some means of cursing Israel effectually, GOD met him, and put a word in his mouth.

SCEPT. But the tenor of what this apparition said makes against you. "Why hast thou disquieted me," it asked, "to bring me up?" Therefore, here is an express proof that it was not the spirit of him whom it personated; because we are all agreed that witchcraft, which undoubtedly existed in the Mosaic dispensation, could not have any effect over the happiness of the Blessed.

SOPHRON. Nor is there reason to look on these words as any thing more than figurative—as a

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representation to human faculties of what is above them. "Why hast thou given me the trouble of coming up?" You might just as well build an argument on the words "coming up;" which would be manifestly absurd.

SCEPT. He says again, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Now, in the first place, the battle of Gilboa did not take place on the morrow; and, in the second, Saul, at its conclusion, was certainly not with Samuel, but in "his own place."

SOPHRON. As to the word "to-morrow," that must be taken with the same latitude which we allow to the expressions "for ever," &c., in Holy Scripture; and as to being "with me," what meaning so natural as—thou shalt be in the state of the dead in another world?

SCEPT. Still, whatever may be decided about this relation, it is not of very much importance to the present inquiry, because it occurred in the Jewish theocracy, and there is no arguing from that, in a matter of this kind, to the Christian dispensation. In the New Testament we find hardly a hint of the possibility of departed souls re-appearing; though many, I willingly grant you, of the appearances of angels.

SOPHRON. When our LORD appeared to the disciples as they were on the sea, they were terrified in the thought that they had seen a spirit. He never rebuked them for this thought; He simply assured them that they were mistaken in the fact,

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not that they imagined an impossibility. "It is I: be not afraid." And still more remarkably in another instance. After His resurrection, "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." How did He answer? "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;" which seems quite to show the possibility of their seeing a spirit. And I can understand nothing else by the persuasion of the Church of Jerusalem, when S. Peter was loosed out of prison,—"then said they, It is his angel,"—than their belief that it was his ghost. No; I think the New Testament is more express even than the Old, on the possibility of such apparitions. In the former we have one solitary instance, and that instance not unattended with objections and difficulties; in the latter, we have two virtual admissions of our LORD Himself, that the appearance of spirits is a possible thing.

SCEPT. You are fond of building on one argument, which, considered quietly, has no weight at all. People call the seeing a ghost the effect of imagination. Not so, say the advocates on your side the question, because if one person may fancy such an apparition, two at the same time, and in the same place, certainly would not. On the contrary, my own belief is, that if one person took such a fancy into his head, it would be contagious. You know that in the great Plague, a whole crowd asseverated that they beheld a ghost, which one fanatic pointed out.

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SOPHRON. True. But it was pointed out to them first. They did not simultaneously fancy it. That is what I assert, in a case of mere fancy, to be impossible. In the greater part of those instances, where a spirit has appeared to two persons at the same time, both have become sensible of its presence in the same identical moment; not one pointed it out to the other. Though, were an instance of this last to be produced, it would determine nothing definite against that apparition, because such was the case with Saul and the witch of Endor. The enchantress, it is manifest from the story, perceived it before the monarch. But this argument of yours about fancy, never possessing any great weight, is most unphilosophical of all, where you have to imagine a curious coincidence of the fancy and the thing fancied; as when, at the moment of his death, the dying man appears to a friend at a distance.

SCEPT. But the difficulty of verifying such stories! The impossibility of verifying them at first hand!

SOPHRON. Of course, if a man does not endeavour to verify them, we cannot expect to find them verified. It is no difficult thing to do, with respect to modern stories; and as regards ancient accounts, several of them are regarded with a degree of testimony that would be amply sufficient to establish the most important piece of history. Such is that relation of the Banshee seen by Lady Fanshawe; of the appearance of the ghost of Sir

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George Villiers to Parker; such, also, in recent times, the tale we yet have to relate of the Fate of Booty.

SCEPT. Consider the moral consequences of such a belief: what cowards it tends to make men; how superstitious—how unfit for the ordinary concerns of life.

SOPHRON. Nay; confess yourself, which would be more terrified of the two at a real apparition; the man who had always believed such an event possible, though unlikely; or he that had regarded it as absolutely impossible? It would be all the difference between an army that came prepared on an expected enemy, and one which fell into an unlooked for ambush. And one thing I take to be worthy of relation; I never yet heard of a spectre that was said to have appeared, when he by whom it was seen had been talking or thinking of such matters; that is, when he was in the state of mind, which, according to you, would be most likely to produce such imaginations. I say never: for I do not think an obscure story of an apparition, which was said to have presented itself on board the Victory to the officers, when they had been discussing such matters, to have been more than (what was so very likely on board any ship, and still more on board a ship not in active service) a trick.

SCEPT. Well, seeing is believing. When I see a ghost, I shall believe that others may have done so.

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SOPHRON. Why, to be consistent, you ought not to believe it a whit the more then. If others had fancied such things, so may you; and therefore such fancy would be no ground for any change in your views. But seriously, the state of mind that will not believe except on sight, is a most unhappy one.

SCEPT. On this subject, I fear it will never alter. Nevertheless, I shall be glad, if you will allow me to attend a renewal of this discussion to-morrow evening.

SOPHRON. Most willingly.

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NIGHT VIII.

OF APPARITIONS AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

SOPHRON. We said, some nights ago, that the well-authenticated instances of the apparition of spirits, at the moment of their departure from the body, were far more numerous than those of any other kind. There is so much sameness in these relations, that we shall probably not be desirous of hearing very many: five or six examples, on incontrovertible authority, will prove as much as fifty.

SCEPT. I enter a protest against all cases in which the visitation of these apparitions has not been mentioned till after the death of the person was known. One can never tell how far the sheer desire of having a wonderful occurrence to relate, will lead a man.

SOPHRON. You will not generally find that people have kept such kind of visitations secret; therefore, that argument will be cut away from under you. These visitations are generally

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useless, using the word as we have all along used it; though there may be an instance or two to the contrary.

PISTUS. One such I will tell you. The father of a dignitary of our Church, very well known in London, was a colonel on service in Canada. His regiment was quartered in some place in that country, and two of his officers were stationed in an outpost at some distance from head-quarters. They slept in the same room, and on the following morning, one said to the other—"Pray, did you see any thing remarkable last night?" "Yes," said the other, "I did; did you?" "Assuredly," was the reply, "I saw the apparition of Colonel B." "Did he say anything to you?" "Yes." "So he did to me: we will not tell each other what it was; but we will make a deposition of it, and see if our two accounts agree." They accordingly did so; the two depositions agreed exactly, and to the following effect:—That Colonel B. had appeared to each of them; that he had requested them, when they returned to England, to take care of his son, then a young child, thither; on reaching London, to go to such a room, in such a house, in such a street, naming each; and when there, to look in such a drawer of such an escritoire, which he described exactly; that in that drawer they would find a paper, which he also particularized; that they should present this paper, together with his son, to Queen Charlotte; that if they did this, it would be the making of the boy's fortune, and

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that they themselves would be gainers. On finding that their two stories so completely tallied, they rode together to head-quarters, and there learnt that Colonel B. was dead. Shortly afterwards, the regiment was ordered to England; they took charge of young B., went to the house described on arriving in London, and found the paper without any trouble. They presented it and the child, as directed, to the queen; the boy was thenceforth taken under royal patronage, and obtained as many pieces of preferment as he could hold; and the officers themselves were shortly afterwards promoted. This story comes from the relation of the party principally concerned, namely, Colonel B.'s son himself.

SCEPT. Not, then, from that of the officers.

PISTUS. No.

SCEPT. Then you have no witness at all to the fact of the apparition; merely to events which took place in consequence of that event, real or supposed.

PISTUS. Why, you would hardly accuse two officers of the grossest deceit, practised, too, for no imaginable end. If they were not informed of the paper and the escritoire supernaturally, they must have heard the story from Colonel B. in his lifetime; and why be at the trouble of denying this fact, and getting up another, which, till the event proved it true, must have exposed them to great ridicule?

SCEPT. But why should not Colonel B. have told

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them the secret in his lifetime, as well as after his death?

PISTUS. Oh, you may imagine many reasons for that. He might naturally have been unwilling, when in health, to trust it to any one; when he lay on his death-bed, as I said, his two friends were absent, and he might have been unable to write. But, after all, there is a simpler and easier solution, which is by no means improbable, namely, that Colonel B. might not have become acquainted with the importance that that paper would exercise on his son's fortunes, till he entered the invisible world.

SOPHRON. Very true. I think, Scepticus, we may turn Dr. Johnson's dictum against you: "He who relates nothing beyond the limits of probability, has a right to demand that they shall believe him, who cannot contradict him."

SCEPT. So you call such an appearance as this, "nothing beyond the limits of probability."

SOPHRON. In itself, certainly not: you say there is an antecedent improbability, which we do not see.

PISTUS. I need not remind you, also, that the thing was sworn to, and could therefore, I presume, be legally verified in Canada.

SOPHRON. I will now give you an instance which occurred in Malta. Major Gainfoot—I use a name *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν*—was at the mess-table with his brother officers, when his servant stepped in, and announced his brother, Colonel Gainfoot, as

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just arrived from England. "Bring him in, bring him in, Gainfoot," cried several of the officers, by whom he was well known. The major stepped out with that design, and presently returned by himself. "He seemed in rather a singular state," said he; "he pleaded business, and said that he was obliged to decline your invitation." "But how is he?" said some one. "Why, truly, he said very little about himself or any thing else; but I suppose I shall see him by and by." However, that day and the next passed, and no Colonel Gainfoot appeared; and by the next mail from England, came news of his death at the precise moment that his arrival was announced to the officers.

SCEPT. I can hardly imagine one brother conversing with another, and not finding out that he was talking to an apparition, if the case really were so. How many questions of "When, and how, and why did you come?" and such like, must naturally be asked, which would not be answered!

SOPHRON. One should expect so; and so, indeed, it actually might have been in this case. Any how, Major Gainfoot thought that his brother's behaviour was strange and unaccountable. But I will read you, from Lord Byron's Life, a more remarkable instance of the same thing. "Lord Byron," says Moore, "used sometimes to mention a strange story, which the commander of the packet, Captain Kidd, related to them on the

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passage. This officer stated that, being asleep one night in his berth, he was awakened by the pressure of something heavy on his limbs; and, there being a faint light in the room, could see, as he thought, distinctly the figure of his brother, who was at that time in the same service in the East Indies, dressed in his uniform, and stretched across the bed. Concluding it to be an illusion of the senses, he shut his eyes, and made an effort to sleep; but still the same pressure continued; and still, as often as he ventured to take another look, he saw the figure lying across him in the same position. To add to the wonder, on putting his hand forth to touch this form, he found the uniform, in which it appeared to be dressed, dripping wet. On the entrance of one of his brother officers, to whom he cried out in alarm, the apparition vanished; but, in a few months after, he received the startling intelligence that, on that night, his brother had been drowned in the Indian seas. Of the supernatural character of this appearance, Captain Kidd himself did not appear to have the slightest doubt."

PISTUS. I said, some time ago, that I could give you an instance of the apparition of one child to another. A Mr. B., of considerable practice as a surgeon, and who lived in Golden-square, was attending the infant of his brother-in-law, who was ill of scarlet fever. Desirous of preserving the other children from infection, he offered them a temporary home in his own house. The offer

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was accepted, and the children accordingly removed. One of them, a little girl of about five years of age, was playing in a dressing-room which opened out of a bed-room then used as a nursery, her aunt, Mrs. B., being in this nursery. All on a sudden she called out, "Oh, aunt! come and see the baby, the poor baby! There he is—there!" pointing to a corner of the room, and half way between the floor and the ceiling. Mrs. B. came in, and nothing was to be seen; but the child persisted in her story. This was about five o'clock in the evening; and shortly afterwards Mr. B. returned home, and said that the infant had actually died at that time. Now, will you say that this was a singular coincidence, or confess that it was supernatural?

SCEPT. If the tale were told by the child before the news of her brother's death were received——

PISTUS. As it most undoubtedly was.

SCEPT. Then, I think, that is a very strong case on your side.

PISTUS. And so deep was the impression made on the child's mind, that she afterwards used to request permission to go into the dressing-room, under the idea that she should see her brother there. There certainly was no deceit in the case; there could be no room for fancy; nor does it reach you by any circuitous course. Mr. B. told it to a lady, from whom I have it.

EUSEBIA. I have heard a somewhat similar story, though I cannot avouch its truth so positively. A

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gentleman, whose mother was in a declining state of health, was keeping house in the absence of his wife. One of his children, who was little more than an infant, slept in a closet opening out of his bed-room. He awoke in the middle of the night, under the impression that some one was kissing his cheek; and, to his horror, he saw the figure of his mother standing by him. "Do not be sorry for me," it said; "I am happy;" and forthwith vanished in the direction of the closet. At the time of its disappearance, the child who slept in that closet shrieked out as if much alarmed. The gentleman of course imagined that his mother was dead; he resolved, however, to wait for the post. A letter came, not sealed with black; he opened it, and found that she was better. But, on re-perusing it, he observed that it was dated a day earlier than it ought to have been; and on looking at the outside, found the stamp, "too late." He now waited with great anxiety for the next post; and that brought him an account of the death of his mother, at the very time that he had seen her figure by his bed-side.

SCEPT. So those stories always terminate; but the exact time, I should think, was often difficult to ascertain.

PISTUS. Why so? The time of death is always noticed; and if you saw such an apparition as we have been discussing, would not almost your first impulse be, to consult your watch?

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SOPHRON. Glanville has one instance of the same kind; but it is not a very striking one. Dr. Rush, afterwards bishop of Dromore, a name not ignoble among our divines, vouched for its truth. A London tradesman, named Watkinson, who lived in Smithfield, had a daughter married to one Francis Topham, resident at York. The match had taken place against the parents' consent; but the offence had been forgiven, and Mrs. Topham sometimes visited her father. "When she was last with him," proceeds the story, "upon their parting, she expressed a fear that she should never see him more. He answered her, if he should die, if ever GOD did permit the dead to see the living, he would see her again. Now, after he had been buried half a year, on a night when she was in bed, but could not sleep, she heard music, and the chamber grew lighter and lighter; and she, being broad awake, saw her father stand at her bedside, who said, 'Mall, did I not tell thee that I would see thee once again?' She called him father, and talked of many things; and he bid her be patient, and dutiful to her mother. And when she told him that she had a child since he did die, he said that would not trouble her long. He bade her speak what she would now to him, for he must go, and that he should never see her more till they met in the kingdom of heaven. So the chamber grew darker and darker, and he was gone, with music. And she said she did never dream of him, nor ever see any apparition of him

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after. He was a very honest, godly man, as far as I can tell."

EUSEBIA. A singular instance of an apparition unattended with terror on the part of the person visited by it.

PISTUS. There is a captain in the West India packet service, now living, who affirms—and he is known for a man of honour—that the spirit of his deceased wife appears to him at stated intervals, and that he looks forward to her visits (I think they occur once a month) as the greatest happiness of his life.

SOPHRON. But the most complicated story, so to speak, of an apparition, is one which occurred on board a Brazil packet. A lady was lying on the sofa in the ladies' saloon, when, to her surprise, a gentleman entered it from the grand saloon, and passing through it, went out by the door that led towards the hold. She was much astonished, both that any one should enter the room at all, at least without knocking, and at not recognizing the gentleman who did so, as she had associated with the passengers for some days. She mentioned the matter to her husband, who said that he must have been confined to his berth till then, but that it would perhaps appear, when the passengers sat down to dinner, who he was. At dinner-time, the lady carefully examined her companions, and was positive that no such person was among them. She asked the captain if there were any passenger not then at table. He an-

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swered her, that there was not. She never forgot the circumstance, though her husband treated it as a mere fancy, and thought no more of it. Some time afterwards, she was walking with him in London, when she pointed out a gentleman in the street, and said, with some agitation, "There! there! that is the person whom I saw on board the packet. Do go and speak to him; pray do go, and ask him if he were not there." "Impossible, my dear," replied her husband; "he would think that I meant to insult him." However, his wife's importunity and agitation prevailed. Stepping up to the gentleman she had pointed out, and apologizing for the liberty he was about to take, "Pray, sir," said he, "may I ask whether you were on board the —— Brazil packet at such a time?" "No, sir," replied the person addressed, "I certainly was not; but may I inquire why you thought that I was?" The interrogator related the circumstance. "What day was it?" asked the other. That having been settled, "Well, sir," said the stranger, "it is a very remarkable circumstance that I had a twin brother, so like myself that no one could tell us apart. He died, poor fellow, in America on that very day."

PISTUS. The most remarkable point in that story is its localism, so to speak. A man dies in America; and his spirit is seen, on that very day, on board a ship between America and England, as if crossing from one country to the other.

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SCEPT. Well, if that be not materialism, I cannot imagine any thing that is.

PISTUS. I only said what it seemed like; I do not presume to say what the real explanation may be. But I can see no more materialism in imagining a spirit to move locally, than to rest locally, as in the case of haunted houses.

SOPHRON. I will read you a story connected with a remarkable trial in the Court of King's Bench, London, as extracted from those for the years 1687, 1688, by Cockburn in his travels.

"An action in the Court of King's Bench was brought by a Mrs. Booty against Captain Barnaby, to recover 1000*l.* as damages for the scandal of his assertion that he had seen her deceased husband, Mr. Booty, a receiver, driven into hell.

"The journal books of three different ships were produced in court, and the following passages recorded in each, submitted to the court by the defendant's counsel.

"'Thursday, May 14, 1687. Saw the island of Lipari, and came to an anchor off the same island, and then we were at W.S.W.

"'Friday, May 15. Captain Barnaby, Captain Bristow, Captain Brown, I, and a Mr. Ball, merchant, went on shore to shoot rabbits, on Stromboli; and when we had done, we called all our men together to us, and about three quarters past three o'clock we *all* saw two men running towards us with such swiftness that no living man could run half so fast; when all of us heard Captain

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Barnaby say, 'Lord, bless us; the foremost is old Booty, my next door neighbour;' but he said he did not know the other, who ran behind. He was in black clothes, and the foremost was in grey. Then Captain Barnaby desired all of us to take an account of the time, and pen it down in our pocket-books: and when we got on board we wrote it in our journals, for we saw them run into the flames of fire, and there was a great noise, which greatly affrighted us all, for we none of us ever saw or heard the like before. Captain Barnaby said, 'He was certain it was old Booty which he saw running over Stromboli, and into the flames of hell.'

"Then coming home to England, and lying at Gravesend, Captain Barnaby's wife came on board the 6th day of October, 1687, at which time Captain Barnaby and Captain Brown sent for Captain Bristow and Mr. Ball, merchant, to congratulate with them; and after some discourse, Captain Barnaby's wife started up, and said, 'My dear, old Booty is dead;' and he directly made answer, 'We all saw him run into hell.' Afterwards Captain Barnaby's wife told a gentleman of his acquaintance in London what her husband had said, and he went and acquainted Mrs. Booty of the whole affair: upon that Mrs. Booty arrested Captain Barnaby in a 1000*l.* action for what he had said of her husband. Captain Barnaby gave bail for it, and it came to a trial in the Court of King's Bench, and they

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had Mr. Booty's wearing apparel brought into court, and the sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died; and we swore to our journals, and it came to the same time within two minutes. Ten of our men swore to the buttons on his coat, and that they were covered with the same sort of cloth his coat was made of, and so it proved.

"The jury asked Mr. Spinks (whose handwriting in the journal that happened to be read appeared) if he knew Mr. Booty: he answered, 'I never saw him till he ran by me on the burning mountains.'

"The judge said, 'Lord, have mercy on me, and grant I may never see what you have seen. One, two, or three may be mistaken, but thirty never can be mistaken.'

"So the widow lost her cause. The defence set up was, that the defendant had spoken no more than had been seen by a number of persons as well as himself[1]."

PISTUS. I will tell you another of these popular stories, which may or may not be true. It runs thus. At some one of the great theatres a diabolical dance was introduced, which was performed by twelve fiends. The first night it was exhibited the dancers perceived to their horror that a thirteenth fiend had introduced himself among them.

[1] A Voyage up the Mediterranean, &c., in 1810 and 1811, by Lieut.-Gen. Cockburn. Vol. ii. p. 335, &c.

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They were so terrified that they retired from the stage, and the thing was never exhibited again. It was said at the time that there was no possibility of a trick; and certainly, if the appearance of a real fiend might ever be expected, it would be on such an occasion.

SOPHRON. Before we conclude, I have one or two more tales which will not be out of place here, though perhaps they had been more appropriate in some preceding nights. The first of these is related in the late Mr. Barham's journal, from which I will read it to you.

"*Nov.* 1832.—At the death of her father, Miss R—— inherited, among other possessions, the home-farm called Compton Marsh, which remained in her own occupation, under the management of a bailiff. This man, named John ——, was engaged to be married to a good-looking girl, to whom he had long been attached, and who superintended the dairy. One morning, Miss R——, who had adopted masculine habits, was going out with her greyhounds, accompanied by a female friend, and called at the farm. Both the ladies were struck by the paleness and agitation evinced by the dairy-maid. Thinking some lovers' quarrel might have taken place, the visitors questioned her strictly respecting the cause of her evident distress; and at length, with great difficulty, prevailed upon her to disclose it. She said that, on the night preceding, she had gone to bed at her usual hour, and had fallen asleep, when she

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was awakened by a noise in her room. Rousing herself, she sat upright and listened. The noise was not repeated, but between herself and the window, in the clear moonlight, she saw John standing within a foot of the bed, and so near to her, that by stretching out her hand she could have touched him. She called out immediately, and ordered him peremptorily to leave the room. He remained motionless, looking at her with a sad countenance, and in a low, but distinct tone of voice, bade her not be alarmed, as the only purpose of his visit was to inform her that he should not survive that day six weeks, naming, at the same time, two o'clock as the hour of his decease. As he ceased speaking, she perceived the figure gradually fading, and growing fainter in the moonlight, till, without appearing to move away, it grew indistinct in its outline, and finally was lost to sight. Much alarmed, she rose and dressed herself, but found every thing still quiet in the house, and the door locked in the inside as usual. She did not return to bed, but had prudence enough to say nothing of what she had seen, either to John or to any one else. Miss R—— commended her silence, advising her to adhere to it, on the ground that these kind of prophecies sometimes bring their own completion along with them.

"The time slipped away, and notwithstanding her unaffected incredulity, Miss R—— could not forbear, on the morning of the day specified, riding

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down to the farm, where she found the girl uncommonly cheerful, having had no return of her vision, and her lover remained still in full health. He was gone, she told the ladies, to Wantage market, with a load of cheese which he had to dispose of, and was expected back in a couple of hours. Miss R—— went on and pursued her favourite amusement of coursing; she had killed a hare, and was returning to the house with her companion, when they saw a female, whom they at once recognized as the dairy-maid, running with great swiftness up to the avenue which led to the mansion. They both immediately put their horses to their speed, Miss R—— exclaiming, 'Good God! something has gone wrong at the farm!' The presentiment was verified. John had returned, looking pale and complaining of fatigue, and soon after went to his own room, saying he should lie down for half an hour, while the men were at dinner. He did so, but not returning at the time mentioned, the girl went to call him, and found him lying dead on his own bed. He had been seized with an aneurism of the heart."

Pistus. I have heard an even more incomprehensible story of this kind. The mistress of a family was slightly indisposed, and had told her servant that she should breakfast in bed. This servant was engaged in the hall, when, to her surprise, the lady came down stairs in her dress-

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ing-gown, and, though the morning was very cold, hurried out of doors in an agitated manner. The servant went up into the lady's bed-room, and found her asleep. On coming down to her family, this lady said, that she had that morning had a troublesome dream; she had imagined that a robber entered the room, and that she had hastened down stairs in her dressing-gown, and had left the house.

EUSEBIA. I will give you another curious instance of corpse lights. A minister of the Scotch establishment, on his way home, one evening, leant on the wall of the churchyard to admire the beauty of the twilight lake that stretched at his feet. On a sudden, two small lights rose from a particular spot in the churchyard, crossed the lake, entered a hamlet on the other side, stayed there some short time, and then returned in company with a much larger light, and sank into the ground at the place whence they had risen. The worthy minister went into the churchyard, threw some stones on the spot to mark it, and next morning inquired of the clerk if he remembered having interred any one there. The man answered, that, many years before, he had buried two little children, whose father, a blacksmith, was still alive, though an old man, and resided in the hamlet beyond the lake. Scarcely had the minister received this information when he was summoned to attend the death-

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bed of this same blacksmith, who had been seized with paralysis; and who was shortly afterwards buried in the same grave with his children.

PISTUS. With respect to the ambulones, of whom we were speaking, let me read you the following extract from Lord Lindsay's travels.

"Milton, as has been well remarked by Warton, probably borrowed this idea from the popular narrative of Marco Polo, and speaking of the 'hungry desert,' as it is called, of the Mongols, he says, it is asserted as a well-known fact, that this desert is the abode of many evil spirits, which amuse travellers to their destruction with most extraordinary illusions. If, during the day time, any persons remain behind in the road until the caravan has passed a hill, and is no longer in sight, they unexpectedly hear themselves called to by their names, and in a tone of voice to which they are accustomed. Supposing the call to proceed from their companions, they are led away by it from the direct road, and not knowing in what direction to advance, are left to perish. In the night time they are persuaded they hear the march of a large cavalcade on one side or other of the road, and concluding the noise to be that of the footsteps of their party, they direct theirs to the quarter from whence it seems to proceed; but upon the breaking of day, find they have been misled, and drawn into a situation of danger. Sometimes, likewise, during the day, these spirits assume the appearance of

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their travelling companions, who address them by name, and endeavour to conduct them out of the proper road. It is said, also, that some persons, in their course across the desert, have seen what appeared to them to be a body of armed men advancing towards them, and apprehensive of being attacked and plundered, have taken to flight. Losing by this means the right path, and ignorant of the direction they should take to regain it, they have perished miserably of hunger. Marvellous, indeed, and almost passing belief, are the stories related of these spirits of the desert, which are said at times to fill the air with the sounds of all kinds of musical instruments, and also of drums, and the clash of arms; obliging the travellers to close their line of march, and to proceed in more compact order.[1]"

It will be seen from the following passage of Vincent le Blanc, that a similar belief prevails in the Arabian desert; the Bedouins are always uneasy if the traveller loiters at a distance from his caravan.

"From thence" (the Dead Sea) "we took our way through the open desert, marching in rank and file. Upon our march we were from hand to hand advertised that some one of our company was missing, that strayed from the rest; it was the companion of an Arabian merchant, very sad for the loss of his friend: part of the caravan

[1] Book i. c. 35, p. 159, Marsden's edition.

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made a halt, and four Moors were sent in quest of him, and a reward of a hundred ducats was in hand paid them, but they brought back no tidings of him; and it is uncertain whether he was swallowed up in the sands, or whether he met his death by any other misfortune, as it often happens, by the relation of a merchant then in our company, who told us that two years before, traversing the same journey, a comrade of his, going a little aside from the company, saw three men, who called him by his name, and one of them, to his thinking, favoured very much his companion, and as he was about to follow them, his real companion calling him to come back to his company, he found himself deceived by the others, and thus was saved. And all travellers in these parts hold that in the deserts there are many such phantasms and goblins seen, that strive to seduce the travellers, and cause them to perish with hunger and despair[1]."

For one who, like the writer of this note, has *once* felt, though but for a few moments, what it is to lose his way, and feel himself alone in the desert, it is not difficult to realize the feelings of the unfortunate merchant alluded to. Many of these superstitions have probably arisen from those optical phenomena common in the desert; others, doubtless, from the excited, and, as it were, spiritualized tone, the imagination naturally

[1] World Surveyed, p. 11.

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assumes in scenes presenting so little sympathy with the ordinary feelings of humanity: as an instance of this power of fancy, I may mention that when crossing Wady Araba, in momentary expectation of encountering the Jellaheens, Mr. Ramsay, a man of remarkably strong sight, and by no means disposed to superstitious credulity, distinctly saw a party of horsemen moving among the sand-hills; and though we met none, and afterwards learnt that the enemy had already passed up the valley, I do not believe he was ever able to divest himself of the impression."

SOPHRON. One more story of a haunted house. A family residing in Kennington, in a large old-fashioned manor-house, were some few years ago much alarmed by the following circumstances:— Every night at about twelve o'clock there was heard in the room where they might be sitting, a strange rustling all down the walls, as if some person were sweeping them with a hair-broom. This continued till it had gone all round the room, when, if in summer time, it ceased at the door, and it seemed as though some person went out thereat: if it was winter, it stopped at the fire-place, and the fire, however good previously, instantly became extinguished, quite dead, not gradually, but instantaneously. After this had happened for some time, every effort was made to keep the fire burning, but all to no purpose; the sweeping noise gradually went round the chamber, and when it reached the hearth, its effect upon

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the fire was always the same,—it put it out immediately.

Nor was this all; more than once a figure appeared to various members of the family. Its appearance was as of an aged man with a sorrowful countenance, and habited in the dress of a shopkeeper of the last century. He always stood by the fire or by the door, and vanished when the rustling ceased at either place. On one occasion he appeared to one of the ladies of the family at her bed-side; this being unusual, terrified her much, and she adjured him in the name of the TRINITY to tell her what was the cause of his visit: he beckoned her to follow him down stairs, which she did, when he disappeared on the ground-floor, but without speaking. Search was made where he disappeared, but nothing was ever found.

The tradition in the neighbourhood was, that the house had formerly been inhabited by a miserly retired tradesman, who had died suddenly after having buried his wealth in some part of the house, and that, previous to his death, he had never revealed where it was hid.

After some years this family left the house, and though many others subsequently endeavoured to live there, they found it impossible, by reason of the strange noises and apparitions. The place was then pulled down.

Persons are now living (some of the above-mentioned family) who related this account to

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me, and who always, with strong asseverations, vouched for the entire truth of it.

PISTUS. I will tell you a similar occurrence which came under my own knowledge. Two years ago, two brothers were together in Cornwall. They were both men of education, and not addicted to what is generally called superstition. The elder was a barrister of some standing; the younger was in holy orders, and had just been licensed to the curacy of the parish where they were living. Both were members of the English universities; the elder of Cambridge, the other of Oxford. The former was what was generally called a *strong-minded man*, and a notorious ridiculer of ghost stories; the younger, though not weak, was certainly more credulous than his brother.

The house in which they lived stood by itself, and was large and straggling. There was one room in it which had not been opened for many years: the person who let the house to the brothers asserted, that in that room a former occupant and owner of the house had died, and, as it was supposed, with something fearful on his conscience, for his end was very dreadful. Since his death this room had never been opened, and the place, as said the people, was haunted. This relation was, however, laughed at by the brothers, especially by the elder one.

One night the younger brother came to his companion's bed-room, and, knocking in great terror, aroused him, telling him that he heard

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most awful noises in the house, and more especially on the stairs, and in the shut-up room. He was bid not to be so silly, and to go off to bed again. He did so, but the noise still continued; and more strange still, a large mastiff dog, which slept in his room, and which was generally very watchful and fierce, flying out at the slightest noise, crept under the bed, and manifested signs of the extremest fear; nor could either persuasion, or threats, or blows bring him from his hiding-place. Again was the elder brother's room resorted to, and these singular circumstances detailed to him, and he was implored to assist in their investigation. Upon this he arose, and, taking a light, went to the stairs, where the noise was the loudest. It was now his turn to be terrified too. As he stood on the steps, the most extraordinary sounds passed and repassed him: he could not, he said, be mistaken; "Tramp, tramp, tramp," as if some heavy person were going up and down stairs, and so near, that he seemed to himself as if he must be in the way: every portion of the house was searched, except the locked-up room (and that was bolted and barred so strongly that it could not possibly be opened), but nothing was found to throw any light on this wonder: "Tramp, tramp, tramp," up and down it went for hours together. When this was told the persons who had had the care of the house, and had let it, they said there was nothing unusual in it; that others had ob-

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served the same before, and that it was the ghost of old.

The younger brother soon after was appointed to another curacy, and left this house; nor was he sorry to do so; though I know not if he was ever disturbed again. This story was related by a brother of these two, who vouched for the truth of it, as it was told him by the elder brother.

SOPHRON. Here, I think, we will close this part of our subject. Our remaining night is, you know, to be devoted to the consideration of modern prophecies and witchcraft.

SCEPT. Let it be so by all means; and allow me to join your party.

SOPHRON. With pleasure.

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NIGHT IX.

OF INTERCOURSE WITH GOOD AND EVIL SPIRITS.

PISTUS. It is a singular, but certain fact, that of the many recorded stories of apparitions which have occurred in later times, almost all are those of spirits that once tenanted a human body; hardly one of angels, whether good or bad.

SOPHRON. And the reverse is what you might expect. For one account in Holy Scripture of the re-appearance of a human spirit (unless, indeed, that magnificent description of Eliphaz the Temanite, be referred to this head), we have thirty or forty visitations of angels, both to the good, and also to the bad.

THEO. It is that last consideration which renders the matter more difficult to explain; else it might be said that the weakness of present faith, and the abundance of present iniquity, were amply sufficient to account for the fact.

EUSEBIA. It cannot, however, be said, that the visible ministrations of angels have entirely ceased.

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We have that Derbyshire relation, in which a child was taken out of the stream, into which she had accidentally fallen, by (what she declared to be) a beautiful lady, clad in white. As no such person was discoverable, far or near, the parents not unnaturally concluded that an angel had been commissioned to save their little one from death.

THEO. I, too, have heard a story of a similar nature. A widower, with his two children, was on a visit at the house of a friend. The children were playing about (for it was an old-fashioned place) in its rambling passages, their father being ignorant that one of them opened on a deep and uncovered well, when, according to their own account, they were met by the figure of their deceased mother, who made them return. If the apparition were indeed she whom it personated, it is a beautiful instance of the endurance of earthly love beyond the grave: if it were their guardian angel, permitted to assume that shape, it is hardly a less striking lesson of the heed we should take not to despise one of these little ones. I never heard, however, any other tale of the appearance of angels, and am sure that many such do not exist.

PISTUS. And just as rare is it to find instances in which evil spirits, known and confessed as such, have appeared. I pass by the instances of witchcraft, as better spoken of another time: but putting these, be they universally false, or with a

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mixture of truth, aside, there is hardly a case on record where any man professes to have seen or spoken with an evil spirit.

SOPHRON. The case most in point, perhaps, is that famous one at Hammel, in Saxony, where, on the 20th of June, 1484, a piper entered the town, playing a tune which seemed to exercise an irresistible fascination on all the children that heard it. One hundred and thirty, in spite of all efforts used to prevent them, followed the man, and were never afterwards heard of.

PISTUS. Of indefinite apparitions of evil spirits there are traditions enough: and the old writers on demonology invented, as we have seen, a particular class of fiends, whom they called *ambulones*, whose business it was to mislead travellers on wide heaths and solitary places.

SOPHRON. It is curious to observe how, in the common fictions with respect to intercourse between man and his great enemy, the devil is constantly represented as one whom it is most easy to interest and to dupe. He rarely gets the best of a bargain: it is the man who overreaches the evil one. Some flaw is discovered in the engagement; some cunning method of eluding the most express and binding compacts; and the man exults in having outwitted Satan. Now I know not whether this arises from a good or a bad cause. It may arise from either. At first sight it seems a device of the evil one himself, content to be

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despised in this life, if thereby he may the more easily secure his prey in the next. And certain it is, that the light and trifling way of naming the devil in all European languages, and the familiar and absurd names which are bestowed on him, have done incalculable harm. This seems to lead to the conclusion that the source of this contempt is bad. But then again when I consider that this feeling prevails most strongly in the most Catholic country under the sun, namely, Brittany, I see another possible origin for it. For in like manner as many heathens hated and abhorred the evil spirits whom they worshipped, and yet worshipped them, because they so greatly dreaded them, so the feeling of the Church with respect to her ghostly enemies would be precisely the contrary. She too would hate and abhor them, but it would be a hatred without the smallest particle of respect, or fear, or doubt of final victory: she would feel that she was conquering them every day, and would go on conquering to the end: and that feeling involves also the most bitter scorn and contempt. If only for that reason, no mediæval poet could have written Paradise Lost. And in the same way mediæval painters generally represent fiends as rather absurd and grotesque than frightful; something which would occasion laughter, were it not for the strong mixture of disgust.

PISTUS. Perhaps there may be somewhat of

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truth in both statements, namely, that the feeling was at first and in itself good, but perverted by the evil one to evil.

SOPHRON. This naturally leads us to one of the most curious and difficult of speculations—the whole subject of witchcraft. And it is one, I suppose, on which more may be said for both sides of the question, than almost any other. I dare say Scepticus will tell us what arguments he should employ, were he arguing against a believer in the thing.

SCEPT. I should endeavour to show him that the belief in witchcraft is a kind of moral epidemic, prevailing only at certain times and in certain places. This argument cuts off all advantage from multiplied testimony. Just as in the great Plague at Milan, when public opinion ran that the public walls and the sides of houses were smeared with a poisonous ointment that produced the infection; no sensible man would permit a hundred or a hundred thousand instances of people who were supposed to be taken in the fact of thus anointing the walls, to have any more weight with him than one such alleged example; because the thing is clearly impossible. In like manner, if you believe in a moral epidemic, such as the wholesale butchery of witches involves, you are freed from any necessity of answering or explaining individual cases in which witchcraft has been supposed to be exercised.

SOPHRON. It is an easy way of solving the diffi-

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culty; and doubtless such epidemics have raged. Of the same kind was the Tarantula dance in Italy; the mania for the discovery of plots in the time of King Charles II.; the Mississippi scheme in France, and the nearly contemporaneous South Sea bubble in England; the Tulip mania in Holland; and the speculation mania of 1825. You give us an advantage, however, by this view of the matter; because, there is no reason why there should not have been a mania of seeing ghosts, as well as for discovering witches, were both equally false. But we have never heard of any thing at all similar to this.

PISTUS. I allow that the belief in witchcraft has been most curiously circumscribed both in time and place; yet that does not deprive the believers in them (of whom I do not wish to profess myself one—I had rather that *adhuc sub judice lis sit,*) of their great argument: that, undoubtedly, such a power as witchcraft has heretofore been exercised, and therefore might be so again. The antecedent improbability that any such power should exist is very great,—I willingly allow it; at the same time, unless we deny inspiration, this antecedent improbability vanishes; and the question is reduced to this:—has witchcraft ever been practised in a Christian country?

SCEPT. I am willing to allow what you say with regard to the Levitical Law, that it certainly does recognize the existence of witches as such, and

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is not to be understood of mere jugglers, conjurors, mountebanks, and the like, which is the evasion of some. This, I own, I do not consider honest. But still there is very little resemblance between that ancient and our modern sorcery.

PISTUS. Why, there are some very singular resemblances. The most striking is the employment of the art by women, rather than by men, in both cases. And then the "familiar spirit" of old times is quite in accordance with the modern idea of witchcraft.

SCEPT. Do you mean, then, to say, that the localism of the belief is, in your eyes, no argument against it?

PISTUS. I do not: I think it is; but no sufficient argument. There is a localism, also, about many crimes: revenge and its attendant wickednesses are chiefly confined to southern countries; drunkenness to nations of the Teutonic race, and so forth. You will find, too, that the asserted prevalence of witchcraft occurs almost entirely in countries which are not Catholic. Scotland, Germany, and the colonies in North America, and Sweden, have furnished its most singular displays, and it chiefly prevailed in England during the Great Rebellion, and the years which succeeded it.

SOPHRON. True: whereas in other European nations, you will not find its belief in any degree so prevalent as in these. But, Scepticus, I think, has a fair answer.

SCEPT. In this way: that the nations you have

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mentioned, Scotch, Germans, Swedes, and English colonies, are just those which are bound together by a peculiar kindred of blood and language. They embraced the Reformation with more or less avidity; whereas the other European people sooner or later rejected it. There is, no doubt, a nationalism of mind; and that may well have led to the belief, among one set of nations, and the disbelief among another, of the power ascribed to witchcraft. Perhaps, there may be a certain quantum of superstition essential to all people: those of the south took it out, so to speak, in a readiness of belief in miracles which their northern brethren never displayed; those of the north in the gloomier credit they attached to tales of witchcraft.

PISTUS. You have set the case in the light in which, I suppose, many persons would view it. I do not object entirely to the statement, though I would rather put it thus:—If men will not believe in GOD'S miracles, the necessity of believing something leads them to give credit to the devil's.

SOPHRON. And of course, where the Church has less power, the great enemy of the Church will have more. But all this cannot ever do away disbelief in the great mass of tales relating to sorcery. There is something so utterly revolting to common sense in the foolishness of the compact made between the evil one and his victims; something so entirely consonant with the low and grovelling ideas which vulgar minds would form

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of such a compact; nothing grave, nothing solemn; the power wantonly given, and foolishly employed; above all (what we had occasion to notice before), a system of things without reference to Divine Providence. And there, I think, the great difference lies between the sorcerers of old and of our own days. They do not seem to have exercised their power for hurting others, but only for the discovery of secrets, or a revelation of the future. They neither "did good nor did evil;" they simply told, or discovered both. But in our modern tales, one neighbour takes a dislike to another, enters into a compact with the evil one to be revenged on his enemy, and, after all, takes the most miserable and silly revenge that it is possible to conceive.

SCEPT. The confession of such poor wretches is easy enough to explain. Often in their dotage; often wearied out with interrogatories, and sometimes with torture; kept on purpose without sleep; it is not wonderful that they would do anything, or confess anything, to be left at ease. Doubtless there were many poor creatures in the same state as the old beldame mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, who, on being led to the stake, said, "Eh, sirs! but this warm fire, and sae mony gude neighbours, and a' sae cheerfu', is the brawest sight I have seen this mony a lang day."

PISTUS. It is marvellous how such a sensation could be excited by the discovery of a witches' Sabbath, in Sweden, in 1670. The thing itself,

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to any one that will read it, is perfectly incredible; but it is almost equally hard to believe that three or four hundred people, of whom the greater part were children, should profess to have been concerned in such an enterprise,—that twenty-three should have been executed without one protesting their innocence, on simply being asked to plead guilty or not guilty,—and that the accounts of Blockula, the place to which they affirmed that they used to resort, should tally so exactly. I think there must have been diabolical possession one way or the other; not physically, but morally.

SOPHRON. And the possibility of that, in many instances, I should be the last to deny. But in many more, an accusation of witchcraft was the easiest means of annoying, and sometimes of getting rid of an enemy. If it failed of being proved, the accused person had at all events been made an object of suspicion, and the accuser was looked on in the light of a public benefactor. If it succeeded, the prison or the gallows were most effectual means of putting an obnoxious person out of the way.

PISTUS. You will observe, that, in all Catholic traditions of the part which the evil one has taken in human affairs, there is, in connexion with that deep contempt which the Church encourages her sons to feel for him, a solemnity of conception not ill-befitting the occasion. The Church, too, believed, that spiritual malice might be defeated

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by physical agency. The sign of the cross, from the very earliest times, has been regarded as a sufficient protection against the powers of darkness. Holy oil, again, and holy water, and above all, bells, were believed to possess the same virtues. Almost the whole question of supernatural agency resolves itself into this, whether spiritual beings are capable of producing and suffering physical interference. Take the sign of the Cross. Many people, in these days, will allow its utility; but ask them what they mean, and you will find that they speak only of a moral use. The very act of making the sign will, they say, be the means of inducing holy thoughts; and these holy thoughts, so induced, will of course have the effect of enabling him, whose mind they fill, to resist temptation. This, no doubt, so far as it goes, is perfectly true. But it is utterly false to imagine that in this light only did the laity in the mediæval Church view that sign. They looked on it as possessing *per se* virtue; made with whatever carelessness, made, indeed, any how, except in mockery.

THEODORA. And even sometimes without that exception they believed in the virtue of a holy sign. Think of that remarkable story of the two players, one of whom baptized the other in mockery; and the person baptized instantly professed himself a Christian, and suffered for that belief.

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SOPHRON. That is also a curious relation of S. Gregory the Wonderworker, when, compelled by stress of weather, he had passed the night in a heathen temple. The priest, when the saint had gone on his way, could obtain no response from the oracle. He guessed at the reason, or was informed by the demon that haunted that unholy shrine. On this, he pursued S. Gregory; and, on overtaking him, demanded with threats that the oracular power, the source of his lucre, should be restored to the temple. "To show you," said Gregory, "how great is His power, the meanest of Whose servants is thus able to command your deities, I will do as you request; bring me, therefore, ink and a pen." Sitting down, he wrote on a small piece of paper, and desired the priest to lay it on the altar, and to await the result. The priest returned, and had the curiosity to look at the words which were to produce such an effect. They were simply these:—"Gregory to Satan: enter." He did as he was desired, and the oracle resumed its functions; but did not resume them for long; for the priest was so convinced of the weakness of the gods whom he served, that, says the legend, he thenceforth renounced them, and clave to the faith of CHRIST.

SCEPT. You, I see, are not disposed to regard oracles as mere impostures. For my part, I can see no reason to look at them in any other light.

SOPHRON. Nor do I deny that there was a great

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deal of imposture in them. All such answers as are capable of double meanings, doubtless were so. Such was the famous one,

"Aio te, Æacida, Romanos vincere posse:"

Such also that to Crœsus,

Κροῖσος Ἅλυν διαβὰς μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καταλύσει.

"Crœsus, when he hath passed the Halys, shall destroy a mighty kingdom." But there are so many instances in which the event was remarkably prophesied, that I do not think we can set the fulfilment down to a mere coincidence. Such was the oracle given to Hannibal; such was that which foretold the actions of *a* Philip before the birth of Philip of Macedon; such was that given to Scipio, of the destruction of Carthage. And you are to remember, that in no instance is an egregious failure on the part of an oracle recorded. Neither can we be justified, I think, in rejecting all the accounts of Apollonius of Tyana. No story seems to have been more generally credited than the famous tale of his telling the hour of Domitian's death. Lecturing on Philosophy at Ephesus, he suddenly broke off, and exclaimed—"Courage! strike the tyrant! strike him!" And then, after a pause—"The tyrant is dead!" One need not believe all the tales that Philostratus tells of his hero; but they could scarcely ever have been related, had there not been some foundation for them.

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EUSEBIUS. Do you not think that we might naturally conclude, that in opposition to the stupendous miracles of the early Church, Satan would enable his own worshippers to perform some supernatural signs? The case of the Egyptian magicians seems a case in point.

SOPHRON. One has a right to think so; and there are instances in which evil spirits seem to have been forced reluctantly to bear witness against themselves. Plutarch relates, as a well-known fact, the following story:—A grammarian named Epitherses, wishing to leave Greece for Italy, went on board a ship bound to the latter country, and sailed with a prosperous wind. When the vessel, however, was opposite the Echinades, it fell a dead calm, and it was with great difficulty that they were able to reach Paxos. Here they rode at anchor, and, late at night, the crew were either asleep, or engaged in the necessary business of the vessel. Among the latter was Tamois, the Egyptian pilot. On a sudden, a voice was heard from the island, "Tamois! Tamois!" The pilot, either taken by surprise or terrified, made no answer. Again the voice was heard—"Tamois! Tamois!" "What have you to do with me?" he replied. The voice answered, "When you arrive at Phalacrum, announce as loud as you can speak, that *great Pan* is dead." And again all was silence. The pilot and the crew were alike terrified, and consulted what was to be done under the circumstances. At last, Tamois resolved that,

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when he neared the promontory in question, if the wind were fair, he would run past it; if otherwise, he would do his errand. They approached the headland; and when they were close to it, it again fell a perfect calm. Then Tamois, calling up his resolution, mounted the prow of the vessel, and called out in a loud voice, "Great Pan is dead." On this there arose from the continent the sounds of lamentation and wailing, as if an innumerable multitude were joining in it. A fair wind sprang up, and carried the vessel safely to Italy. Of course, the occurrence made a great noise in that country, and was related, in due course of time, to the Emperor Tiberius. He sent for Tamois, and heard the story at length. Plutarch relates this story, in his book on the Cessation of Oracles, as connected with that circumstance. But Christian writers have imagined, and not without some likelihood, a far more solemn explanation of the event. The voyage of Epitherses took place in the nineteenth year of Tiberius, and it would appear likely, in the spring of that year. In the nineteenth year of Tiberius, and in the spring of that year, our LORD was crucified. It has been supposed that on the evening of that very day, and in reference to that event, the message was given. For you must remember that Pan was not only a silvan deity, but among the Arcadians, and perhaps other tribes, a name for the great GOD of all things; as, indeed, the name signifies.

PISTUS. It may be so indeed; but how wonder-

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ful an arrangement of things does such a belief presuppose! Certainly, the services of angels and men *are* ordained and constituted in a wonderful order, if the hypothesis be true.

SOPHRON. Whether the voice which gave the message proceeded from a good or bad spirit, may be a question of doubt; but there can be no doubt as to the nature of those beings by whom it was received with lamentation. But how wonderful a thing it is that spiritual beings should be in want of, or, at least, should be desirous of employing, human agency in this way!

PISTUS. Unless one should say that it was done by the direction of Providence, as a testimony to the nature of the event then occurring; and yet it is difficult to imagine that, because, after all, the occurrence only stands on a guess, and requires testimony itself.

SCEPT. The story is all the more worthy of credit, I allow, from being related by a heathen; for we know the vast number of prophecies of the SAVIOUR, which Christian ingenuity forged under the name of Sibylline verses.

PISTUS. All such predictions, in heathen countries, of our LORD, are not to be so sweepingly condemned. Every one knows that it was the expectation of the world, at the time of His birth, that a mighty Prince was about to arise out of the East. And I can never read the Pollio of Virgil, without believing, either that the poet meant more than a reference to Marcellus, or

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whomever else the ingenuity of commentators has discovered or imagined to have been born in that year; or else, that he was actually, in an inferior sense, inspired, to speak that of which he did not understand the full meaning: and that of him it might be said, as it was of Caiaphas—"And this spake he not of himself." If Caiaphas might be inspired, assuredly Virgil might. And surely we can hardly believe otherwise, when one reads of the Virgin returning, of the golden age commencing, of the traces of former crime disappearing from the earth, of the serpent perishing, of earth, and sea, and heaven rejoicing; hyperboles too immense to have been tolerated in an emperor's son, while the father of the subject of that Eclogue, whoever he might be, had certainly not then attained to the imperial dignity.

SOPHRON. And in the same way, as we had occasion some nights ago to remark, there is no doubt that the symbol of the cross was venerated long before the coming of our LORD.

SCEPT. You will at least grant, that all the various kinds of divination so much in use among the ancients, by birds, by entrails, by rods, by sieves, by cocks, by water, by the hand, and in a thousand other ways, were sheer pieces of jugglery.

SOPHRON. Yes: though I believe that, now and then, the demons who prompted the worship of the ancients were permitted to encourage it, by speaking the truth even through these trivial and

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superstitious inquiries. Of these, the Sortes Homericæ or Vigilianæ, where, by opening Homer or Virgil at random, the line which first met the eye was taken as the answer, afforded some of the most remarkable instances. Not to mention the line of the Iliad, presented to Socrates—

ἤματί κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἱκοίμην.

"I should arrive
On the third day in Phthia's gleby land;"

from which he foretold that his execution would take place on the third day: the Emperor Hadrian, about to adopt L. Varus, and anxious to know his fate, opened on the line of Virgil,

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, nec ultra
Esse sinunt,"

which was exactly fulfilled. So our Charles I. consulted the Virgilian lots in the Bodleian, in company with Lord Falkland. The former opened on,

"Jacet ingens litore truncus,
Avulsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus."

The latter on,

"Heu miserande puer! si qua fata aspera rumpas,
Tu Marcellus eris."

Boissarde assures us that he knew a gentleman who was persecuted in every possible way by a nobleman, at the instigation of his wife. Unable

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to discover what secret enemy he had, he consulted the Virgilian lots, and read,

"Causa mali tanti conjux iterum hospita."

And, in reality, the above named nobleman and his wife had been compelled at that time, through the civil wars in France, to leave their own estate, and to retire to Basle. The early Christians continued the use of the same lot, only substituting the Bible for Homer and Virgil. But it was strenuously opposed by the Fathers, who called it an undoubted tempting of GOD. However, the practice continued to be sometimes employed till a much later period; as is evident from the example of S. Francis, who formed his institute on three *sortes* from the New Testament. It was a very favourite practice among the Puritans, and much in vogue among their preachers. I remember to have read of one, who was desirous of prognosticating success in some undertaking he contemplated, and opened on the verse, "Go, and the LORD be with thee." He went, in reliance on the text, and lost his life.

PISTUS. The observation of days, natural and common enough among the heathen, descended with equal force to most Christian countries. The superstition which makes Friday an unlucky day is, I suppose, common to every nation. By none is it more strongly held than by sailors; and a curious and fruitless effort was made, some time ago, to break them of it. A ship, called Friday,

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had her keel laid on a Friday, was launched on a Friday, was commanded by a Captain Friday, and sailed on a Friday; and, finally, was never more heard of.

SOPHRON. In the same way, in our eastern counties, Childermas day—that is, that day of the week on which the Holy Innocents fell the preceding year—was, and in some degree is, held unlucky.

PISTUS. And there were many sayings as to the various festivals of the Church, some of which were, no doubt, true. Some had a great appearance of likelihood; and some, perhaps, a little savoured of superstition. There was a rhyme as to S. Paul's day:

> "Clara dies Pauli bona tempora denotat anni;
> Si fuerint venti, designant prœlia genti;
> Si fuerint nebulæ, pereunt animalia quæque;
> Si nix, si pluvia est, prædicunt tempora cara."

And another for the Purification:

> "Si Sol splendescat, Mariâ purificante,
> Major erit glacies post festum, quam fuit ante."

And this intense cold was held to last for forty days. On S. Vincent's day (Jan. 22), in vine districts, it was believed that a fine forenoon heralded an abundant vintage; and the monks of houses under the invocation of that saint were accordingly well treated on that day. A rainy Easter was held to predict an abundant corn harvest.

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The concurrence of Lady-day with Good Friday was considered unlucky: an old rhyme says,

"When our Lady falls in our LORD's lap,
Then let England look for mishap."

S. Medardus's day, in May, and S. Urban's, the 24th of that month, were regarded, the first by vinedressers, the second by husbandmen, as presaging, by their fairness or foulness, a plentiful or scarce year. Thunders in March were held extremely unlucky. An old French proverb tells us, that,

"Jamais le villageois n'a matière de dire, Hélas!
S'il ne voit sa maison arse, ou s'il n'oit tonner en Mars."

And other presages from the sky are well known; such as that,

"Blessed is the bride that the sun shines on;
Blessed is the corpse that the rain rains on."

SOPHRON. Of prophecies in modern times, there are not many that are very curious. The most remarkable is that well-known one,

"Octogesimus octavus mirabilis annus."

That we know, from Lord Bacon, to have been in vogue before 1588, and therefore could not have been made for the Armada; and is yet more strikingly applicable to 1688. A similar prophecy—though I know not the exact words—connects the year '45 with misfortune; and 1645 and 1745 seemed to verify it. Another prophecy,

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"When hempe is spun,
England's done,"

was ingeniously interpreted; but one can hardly look on it as more than a coincidence. Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip, Elizabeth—whose initials made the word *hempe*—having reigned, the name England was merged in Great Britain. Other prophecies seem to have been thrown out on the world, in the hope that some one would invent interpretations for them. Such is that (mentioned, as the two former, by Lord Bacon),

"There shall be seen on a day,
Between the Baugh and the May,
The Black Fleet of Norway.
Then England shall have houses of stone;
For after wars you shall have none."

That has also been expounded of the Armada, but with little plausibility. It is difficult to imagine that the Egyptian sorcerers of modern times are impostors. Lane, in his Modern Egyptians, seems to have put the matter out of doubt.

PISTUS. Boissarde tells, on his own authority, a story of an event which occurred to some friend, whose name, from prudential reasons, he suppresses. He had married a young and beautiful bride, not without meeting with great difficulty from an obnoxious rival. Shortly after the wedding, the unsuccessful lover was slain in a duel by the husband; and for this crime he was obliged to leave the country. Extremely anxious to know how his wife employed her solitude, he heard, in

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the place of his exile, of a celebrated magician, and, half out of joke, applied to him. The philosopher assured him that he could fulfil his wish. A day was appointed; and the young nobleman brought several of his friends to be spectators of the event. A young girl was brought in by the magician (just in the same way as is the case with the Egyptian sorcerers), and desired to look in a glass. She described accurately, first the room in which the lady ordinarily sat, then the lady's person; and wound up the whole by adding that a young man was at her side, and apparently enjoying no small part of her affection. The unfortunate husband mounted his horse, and hardly stopped till he approached the city whence he had been banished. Not daring to enter it, he sent a message to his wife, desiring her to meet him at such a spot in a neighbouring forest; proposing first to upbraid her with her infidelity, and then to kill her. She came full of joy; and her husband's heart was softened by her agitation and tears of gladness. Taking her, however, by surprise, he demanded the name of the stranger who, at such an hour of such a day, was with her. She replied, without hesitation, that it was her brother-in-law. Fortunately the matter was susceptible of proof; and the nobleman, thoroughly satisfied, returned to his place of exile, cursing from his very heart the jugglery and delusion of fiends.

SOPHRON. And what are we to say or to deem of the wonderful pretensions of astrology? Are

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we to believe that, from the age of the Chaldeans downwards, it has been one science of imposition and guess work, never right, except by chance; or that it is based on rules, and that those rules have a certain aim, and are worthy of trust?

PISTUS. There can be no doubt that the majority of professors of astrology have believed in their own science; and it seems recognized as one, though as a forbidden one, in the Levitical law. It has been made the means, it is clear, of innumerable impostures; but all this does not prove that, if it were given to men to fathom it, there is not a real law of the future, from the position and influences of the stars. It is hardly possible that so general a belief in sidereal virtue, should have prevailed amongst all nations, if there were no foundation for such credence. Nay, do we not read in Holy Scripture itself, that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera?" which clearly to me seems to mean either nothing, or that the influence of the planets was against him.

THEODORA. It is hardly credible that there should be such a science, and yet that it should be a forbidden one.

PISTUS. Why so? Surely not more incredible than that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil should have stood in the midst of Paradise, and should yet have been forbidden to our first parents.

SOPHRON. There are rules for the science, which any how are learnt, and are observed. The rules

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may themselves be impostures or absurd, but yet may be followed out in good faith.

PISTUS. I remember a professor of astrology visiting one of our universities, and being consulted by many persons who would have been most sorry to appear in the business. In particular, I recollect one instance, either of a curious verification of his rules, or of a most fortunate guess, for the information could have been acquired in no other way. A man took him the nativity of a deceased friend, and desired him to calculate it. On going again to the astrologer, "It is a very curious thing," said the latter, "that the person whose nativity you gave me, must, according to all the rules of science, be dead." His visitor, by way of trying him, persisted that it was not so. "I must then have made some mistake," replied the other, "and will work my calculations over again." He did so; and on receiving a second visit from the man of whom I speak, "It is a most remarkable circumstance," he said; "if your friend be not dead, I frankly confess that the laws of our science have for once failed." "At what time ought he, according to your computations, to have died?" inquired the visitor. The astrologer named a day. "He did die at that very time," rejoined the other; "and you have given me the best possible proof of the reality of your art."

SOPHRON. I have heard that the modern professors of the science do not, in reply to questions as to the extent of the inquirer's life, mark out

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any certain time for his death, but content themselves with telling him that at such a time he will be in imminent danger; if he escapes that, at such another time he will be so again; and so forward, till they pass the period to which, in the natural course of things, he can hope to live.

PISTUS. We began with speaking of the beauty of the stars; and where we commenced, there, it seems, we conclude. It is a wonderful inquiry in which we have been engaged; and one which, in this world, we can never hope to understand. But one cannot wonder, when pursuing such trains of thought, at the impatience of Cleombrotus to possess the world of immortality which Plato had opened to him.

THEODORA. Nor is it less striking to remember the friends with whom we may have discussed such questions, but who are now in that place where they understand them fully. One often fancies how much they must desire to impart some of this knowledge to us whom they have left behind.

SOPHRON. The writers of the sixteenth century on apparitions, endeavoured to show that the spirits of the departed faithful have just as much liberty of motion, and of appearing to whom they please, that we in the flesh possess. I do not think it. I do not believe that, if they retain their earthly affection that animated them here, they could refrain from visiting those whom they have loved, and from whom they are now separated.

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It would rather seem that some strict law of the unknown state forbids such apparitions, unless especially permitted. Doubtless, well for us it is so.

PISTUS. How it would alter the whole course of human existence, if such apparitions constantly took place! Whether they lost, or whether they still retained their terror, it would hardly be compatible with worldly business that they should be permitted.

THEODORA. In all such stories, a superintending Providence seems most clearly manifest. These strange visitants tell just what they were commissioned to tell, and nothing more; they have a message to deliver, and they deliver it: of their own state, of the manner in which they were judged, of their employments, of their associates, they say nothing.

SOPHRON. To that conclusion of a superintending, and a most minutely superintending Providence, our whole discussion, I trust, has been calculated to lead us. The intercommunion of the world of spirits with our own must needs be a most elevating, and ought to be a most consoling, belief. To have those whom we have best loved locally near us, to believe that we are assisted by them in dangers, to remember that they are witnesses of our temptations, and rejoicers in our victory, is one of the most encouraging and inspiriting thoughts that a Christian man can possess. All the ideas, then, that have been raised in our minds,

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of holy thoughts suggested, unseen evils warded off, space or time annihilated for the safety of one in peril, courage renovated, ways directed by the ministrations of spiritual beings; all these things ought to fill our hearts with gratitude, when we express our belief in the Communion of Saints.

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.

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P. 40. Stationary light in Cornwall.
41 do. in Sulworth Castle.
48. 1703 in characters of fire in the air.
49. Our Saviour appeared to Count Affonso –
55. Comets. –
68 "Fey" before death.
70. dying girl sees her sisters & brother deceased.
71. Sensations of drowning persons
72 Story of Mr A. – & his son –
78. The black ship –
80. Boat lost at [illegible]
84. Mr A. seen by Mr [illegible] while ill in [illegible]
90 The [illegible] –
93 Mr. G. died at the time [illegible]
95. The [illegible]
[illegible] Lady [illegible] – a horse! a horse
[illegible] The omens [illegible] apparitions
[illegible]
[illegible]
114 [illegible]
115. [illegible] – [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
123. The [illegible]
125 [illegible]
127 [illegible] – a remarkable story
131. A child sees the apparition of a [illegible]
132. The spirit of [illegible] says he has the power to answer Dr. [illegible] –
134. [illegible] & his Teacher [illegible] 1665.
136. [illegible] "hedge" is a [illegible]
[illegible] was the spirit [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] two travellers on [illegible]
[illegible] The ringing of bells. –
149. The buoyant Butler – & [illegible]
155. Our eyes must be [illegible]

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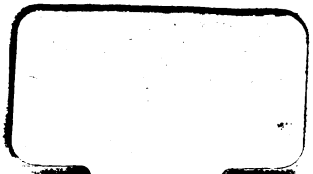

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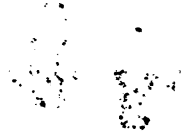

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